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**Perceptions of the Social and Cultural Factors which have
influenced the use of dialect in Orkney**

Doctor of Philosophy

The Open University

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Abstract of thesis

This thesis examines the social and cultural factors which have influenced the use of dialect in Orkney. Orcadians could be said to be bi-dialectal speaking an Orcadian-influenced Scottish Standard English including Norse-derived lexical items spoken within a diglossic speech situation.

The main factors on which the research questions were based featured the effects of migration on the language and dialect of the islands; the attitudes of the local population on the use of dialect in a variety of situations; the consequences of greater demographic movement within Orkney and how this might have shaped the way people interact within the community. Through interviews with people from 13 different locations along with the completion of 100 questionnaires, a comprehensive range of information has been gathered.

The thesis provides a contribution to the literature on the use of dialect in Orkney in an area which has hitherto been generally overlooked and certainly not covered from a social and cultural perspective.

Acknowledgements

Embarking on an academic study of this magnitude – at PhD level – is an experience that requires a number of personal qualities such as commitment, determination and dedication. There is a strong reliance on the co-operation of other people within the institution along with the community interest as a whole. At each stage of the process there are potential pitfalls and elements of doubt and lack of confidence. Sometimes it might be difficult to appreciate the direction to follow and the motivation to continue is occasionally in a perilous state.

There are a number of people who must be identified as important contributors to this thesis. The informants who agreed to be interviewed and recorded and the people who provided responses for the questionnaire must be acknowledged. Without the input of those people it would not have been possible to write four of the chapters of the thesis.

The development of the thesis and the supervision of the work was carried out by Dr Donna Heddle and Professor Kenneth MacKinnon. It was Professor MacKinnon who provided the original stimulus following a small-scale survey as part of a B.Sc degree when he was in the role of tutor with the Open University. Dr Heddle was the driving force behind the original research proposal and the subsequent administrative activities leading up to acceptance as a Doctoral student. Both Dr Heddle and Prof. MacKinnon have had the patience, fortitude and understanding over the past 5 years and have offered guidance, advice and counsel at various stages through to completion of the thesis.

I will always be indebted to Dr Sarah Jane Gibbon for her friendship, encouragement and steadfast approach. As she had recently completed her PhD, Dr Gibbon was able to advise on the need to stay focused and the possible areas of concern in connection with the collation of data and the presentation of the findings. She ensured that I did not lose sight of the ultimate goal which is to finalise this study.

The University of the Highlands and Islands and Orkney College have provided me with the resources and the materials to undertake the fieldwork. I was fortunate in obtaining a Studentship from the UHI Millenium Institute which enabled me to undertake much of the fieldwork in Orkney, Shetland and the Faroe Islands.

Colleagues and friends in Orkney and beyond were important to the success of the studies. Their thoughts and occasional critiques often gave me new perspectives and made me approach the work in a realistic manner.

Family and friends are also worthy of consideration and the understanding and the calming influence of my wife Lillian along with practical advice on layout and reading of texts has been crucial in the way in which I approached the work over the years. It is vital to retain a modicum of reality in such circumstances. Support from other members of the family and assistance from friends provided me with helpful information on the avenues that I might explore.

I would like to dedicate the thesis to the memory of my parents William and Barbara Rendall – or Willo and Barrie as they were known. Their willingness to support me in

the early stages of my academic studies – when I studied for my first Open University degree whilst living on Sanday – was the springboard for future study culminating in the work for this thesis.

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Preface

The inspiration for this thesis was generated by a lifelong interest in the way dialect was used in Orkney and the variations that provide such a mosaic of nuances, words, phrases and idioms. The way of life in Orkney has changed over the past century as a result of movement of people through migration and emigration along with the development of better transport links. Demographic changes as a result of the decision of islanders to leave their homes have encouraged the development of new networks of people from outside Orkney.

Studies of social and cultural change help to inform and instruct people and raises awareness of the rural communities and the factors that have influenced attitudes and perceptions of indigenous people. Attitudes towards accent, dialect and social interchange on the peripheral regions of Scotland are central to the greater understanding of life within the boundaries of the island group.

Although it is important to internalise and rationalise personal feelings and emotions, it is equally instructive to consider externalities and the ways in which those might impinge on the continuity of an island community. The islands of Orkney are perhaps vulnerable yet relatively stable; able to maintain a form of equilibrium; sustainable yet subject to unknown or potential threats from external economic and social forces.

Dialect is an emotive subject and is part of the culture and heritage of Orkney. The English language evolves with the passage of time so variations in the way people use local vernacular will not remain stable. The inevitability of change cannot be ignored

but the impact of the transformation, and the ways in which those changes are perceived by the people of Orkney, is central to the acceptance of transition and development of society in the county.

Some islanders might postulate that dialect is in danger of extinction and that there is little impetus or motivation to save it as a way of communication. The reason for the demise is often directed at the impact of the migration to the islands by people from other regions of the United Kingdom. The media influence is perceived as another contributory factor to the destruction of the Orkney tongue.

The need for an academic study to discover what the people of Orkney felt about the way in which dialect was used is long overdue. Although “old” words have been collected and studies carried out on the Orkney Norn there has been little attention directed to the way in which people use dialect words and their attitudes towards this process. Dictionaries of Orkney words are instructive but only provide a guide to the dialect. There is much to be gained from material collected from people who still use the words. It is interesting to discover the meaning of such words and the impact they have on the population as a whole.

This thesis focuses on the way in which dialect is used in everyday life. Through interviews with people from a number of locations in Orkney, the use of dialect is discussed within the context of work, social activity, education and family. Attitudes are examined and the social and cultural factors that have influenced the use of the dialect are considered using elements from sociological, psychological and anthropological viewpoints.

Chapter One

Introduction

The thesis is entitled: *Perceptions of the social and cultural factors which have influenced the use of dialect in Orkney*. There are close connections with the social sciences - especially sociology, social psychology, anthropology and human geography. The thesis is also informed by the field of sociolinguistics in order to understand some of the concepts in relation to the use of dialect. Trudgill (2000) says that sociolinguistics is that part of linguistics which is concerned with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. Holmes (1992) states that sociolinguists study the relationship between language and society and explain the ways people use language in different social contexts. The way in which people talk is influenced by the social context in which they are talking, the status of the participants and also the setting. The purpose of the interaction and the level of formality are also important and the social distance between those taking part must also be considered.

Many dialects and a wide variety of accents may be heard around the world. Whether the language used is English, German, French, Afrikaans, Chinese or Norwegian there will always be a number of ways in which communication will take place, where ideas will be expressed, and concepts explained. It is important to understand what lies behind the words that people use in their interactions with others. The influences of society are vital and an integral part of the process. There are many ways in which social differentiation may be displayed – through class, age, gender or religion.

Romaine (2000) has spoken of the ways in which dialect tends to differ in connection with remoteness and geographical location. She talks about boundaries that often connected with geographical features such as rivers and mountains. In connection with this thesis her comments on the social boundaries are important:

“We may speak of social dialects ... social dialect says who we are and regional dialects where we came from” (2000:2)

McArthur (2003) considered the way in which some dialects have been perceived in terms of rurality and prestige. Sometimes a variety of language may be seen as a dialect for some purposes and a language for others. McArthur thinks that dialects have often been subsumed by more standard variations and, as a result, their value has been somewhat diminished:

“Historically, varieties labelled as dialects have tended to retreat in the face of the standard, or manage to survive as a “working class” or “rural” usage with a kind of subversive counter prestige” (2003:9)

The *de facto* official language of the Orkney Islands is English. As part of Scotland it would be more accurate to say Scottish Standard English although this could be questioned due to the demographic changes that have taken place over recent years. There are strong links with the Scandinavian past and questions of identity often arise in conversation. It is important to mention that most Orcadians do not see themselves as Scots as they have a strong affiliation with the culture of their forebears from the North.

The dialect used in Orkney is referred to as Insular Scots and Corbett has this to say about the vernacular of Orkney and Shetland: “and the most exotic bloom in the Scots garden is probably Insular Scots which thrives in Orkney and Shetland. More strongly Norse-influenced than its counterparts, Insular Scots is strongly represented in regional literature”. (1997:12)

Although Orkney words have been collected in the past and derivations examined, little work has hitherto been carried out on the social influences behind the use of dialect in the island community. This thesis was based on research questions related to the use of dialect and how it has been influenced by a number of social factors.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The main focus of this thesis is to measure and evaluate social influences on the use of dialect in Orkney. The effects of the movement of people, the in-migration to Orkney over the last 50 years, and changing attitudes to language have shaped the way that the indigenous population use dialect in a variety of social situations.

Figures from the National Census, from 1951–2001, show the demographic changes that have taken place over the last 50 years. In 1951 the population of Orkney was 21,555 with 447 residents born in England and a total of 707 people born outside Scotland. Over the next two decades the population dropped to 17,077 by 1971 with little change in the number of people born outside Scotland. In the 1981 Census however about 8% of the total population of 19,056 was born in England – the total figure of people born outside Scotland is 1,786.

By 1991 the population of Orkney increased by about 3.5% to 19,612 but the number of people born in England increased to 2,327 being 12% of the total population.

The Census returns for 2001 show that the population of Orkney was 19,245 with 16.4% of this total born outside Scotland – the number of residents born in England was shown as 2,496 being 13.6% of the total population. It must be noted that “rest of Europe and elsewhere” accounts for a further 3% of the population of Orkney in 2001. Those statistics need to be approached with caution as a number of people have moved in to Orkney from Scotland. They do provide evidence, however, of the movement of people over the past 50 years.

Demographic change has introduced people from different locations into the county and those individuals bring with them different variants of the English language. The practice of code-switching, where people move or drift from one dialect or language to another is likely to occur in such circumstances.

The frequency of code-switching between dialect and Scottish Standard English (SSE) must be covered as this forms part of the fabric of everyday life. The attitude of local people towards the use of vernacular also needs to be addressed. This was hitherto ignored as studies tended to look at phonological and prosodic features along with etymological analyses. According to Baker (1995), a survey of attitudes useful in identifying social indicators of changing beliefs and is useful explaining the direction of human behaviour. The variation in the dialect between islands and parishes is an important feature.

In order to measure or identify this variation one must look at certain phonetic differences. This was not a primary concern but used to illustrate and highlight differences throughout the islands.

According to the *Glossary of Linguistics* (Trudgill, 2007), dialect is a variety of a language. The ways in which people choose to employ the use of dialect must be acknowledged and the context in which words may be utilised also contributes to the understanding of any communication. The focus of this thesis concentrates on the ways in which social and cultural factors that have influenced the use of dialect. This being the case, the variations will be mentioned where appropriate.

The main aims and objectives then were to consider the factors that have influenced the use of dialect and examine the attitudes of the indigenous population. The aim was to produce a thesis that would inform readers of the ways in which Orcadians communicate and the factors that have impinged on this process. At the outset, one of the objectives was to interview an appropriate number of people in a variety of locations – see Methodology, (Chapter 4) - to provide evidence to support or disprove the research questions. The main fieldwork took place between July 2004 and November 2006. The concluding chapter includes an assessment of whether or not those objectives were realistic along with an appraisal of whether or not they have been achieved.

In the next section the background to the research questions will be given. The demographic changes in Orkney over many centuries will be outlined along with some comments on migration and projections of the population in the future.

1.2 Research Questions

As stated in 1.1 the aims and objectives of this thesis are to examine and evaluate the effects of social and cultural influences on the use of dialect in Orkney. The following research questions have been formulated in order to address the key issues related to the fieldwork:

- Has the perception of Orkney dialect employed within a range of age groups been influenced by migration to Orkney and emigration from the islands
- To what extent do the speakers of Orkney dialect in this study relate changes in the use of Orkney dialect to social, cultural and demographic factors?
- How frequently do the dialect speakers in this study report using the dialect themselves, with different interlocutors?
- What are the attitudes of dialect speakers towards their use of Orkney dialect and what social functions do they consider that the dialect fulfills?
- Have the variations in the use of dialect and the recognition of such changes been perceived as exacerbated by the increased movement of people within Orkney and greater mobility in terms of travel outwith the islands?

The thesis considers the means by which the societal changes in Orkney have influenced the way indigenous people use dialect at the present day. The islands have experienced much movement of people and it must be postulated that this has had a significant affect on the ways in which people carried out any form of communication within Orkney and with people from other lands who arrived in the islands over many centuries. The thesis will also consider the legacy of past times and the influence of a language no longer used on the islands.

In order to understand the background to the above questions it is imperative that the historical context is considered as this addresses the ways in which the dialect evolved and developed in Orkney

1.3 Historical Context

For centuries the Orkney Islands spoke with a Norse/Scots dialect, which replaced the Norn, which itself derived from West Norse. Although the exact date of Norse settlement in Orkney is not known it was likely that it extended over generations and possibly was complete by 900AD.

One of the enduring debates or discussions between historians, archaeologists and other interested parties is on the subject of the fate of the Picts. Orkney was part of the Pictish kingdom from 300 – 800 AD. The size of the indigenous population of Orkney about 800 AD is not known but it would have been made up of Picts and Irish monks. Remains of churches and chapel sites are still be found in Orkney. When the people of Scandinavian lands arrived in Orkney, therefore, they would have found this mix of holy people and individuals who held allegiance to another kingdom. Although there is no documentary evidence to support the effects of the invasion, there are a number of theories and viewpoints on the subject that will now be explored.

The *Historica Norwegiae* carries an account of the Picts which was written circa 1211 by an anonymous cleric:

“ these islands were at first inhabited by the Picts..... they little exceeded pigmies in status ... did marvels in the morning and in the evening..... but at midday they entirely lost their strength ... and they lurked through fear in underground houses.....

In the days of Harold Fairhair (King of Norway) ... people set out with a great fleet ... crossed the Solundic Sea and stripped these races of their ancient settlements, destroying them wholly ... and subdued the islands to themselves.....” (From a translation by Devra Kunin, 2001:8)

This is a somewhat cataclysmic view of the Scandinavian immigration. It is a view, however, which other historians have shared over a number of decades. Brian Smith from Shetland is one of the main protagonists – his opinion is that the Vikings did not wish to share their land with their predecessors and that there would have been little chance of the Picts escaping the onslaught. (Smith 2001). He mentions other cultures in which similar conditions prevailed and cites examples from all over the world in order to reinforce his argument.

Wainwright, writing in 1962, indicated that there might well have been violence and some devastation in the first phase of the settlement but “... there are indications that the Picts and their Christianity were not swept out of the Northern Isles.....” He based this assertion on the fact that Christian traditions survived on small islands such as Papa Westray, Pictish and Irish-Scottish art forms also were saved from destruction and the incumbent population were integrated with the new settlers (Wainwright 1962:115).

Some modern writers have taken a more conciliatory view of the situation and suggest that the sheer volume of Norse immigrants might have been responsible for the impact of the language on the indigenous population of Orkney. It might have been fashionable to speak Norse – comparisons have been made with the number of

American words that have crept into the vocabulary in Britain today. According to Backlund, there are no signs of the Norse trying to assert their domination “.....the settlement appears to have been peaceful ... to some Picts, the Scandinavians probably constituted at threat ... to others a golden opportunity....” (Backlund 2001:36)

There is no general agreement on what actually happened when the Scandinavians arrived in Orkney and there is no documentary evidence of the way in which they transformed the way of life. It has been mentioned by Hugh Marwick and others that there were Scandinavian settlers in Orkney long before the mass migration in the early 9th Century (Marwick 1929, 1992). As their ability to develop bigger boats increased so did their ambitions and their need to explore other lands. It is unlikely that the Picts and Irish monks were totally surprised by their appearance around 800 AD. It is possible that some of the population may have moved back to the north of Scotland leaving their land to the invading Norse people.

Wainwright said that there may have been some violence and devastation but he did not think that the Picts were swept out of the islands. He says that Christian traditions were recognised and their art forms survived – indeed some of the Scandinavians might have been drawn into the philosophy of the holy people. Wainwright concludes that “In other fields the Picts gave little or nothing to the Scandinavians and the future of the Northern Isles belonged essentially to the Scandinavian world..... the Picts were overwhelmed politically, linguistically, culturally and socially ... that is why, after so many centuries, the Northern Isles are still so Scandinavian in their outlook and character” (Wainwright 1962:162).

The settlers would have borrowed some words from native languages used in Orkney possibly based on Celtic sources but.... “The Norsemen were masters; they had no incentive to learn the native tongue...” (Marwick 1927:xvi). According to Marwick the “Scotticizing” of Orkney would have been rapid from the middle of the 15th Century with the pledging of Orkney to Scotland in 1468.

It is difficult to know what the Norn was like before it was superseded by the language spoken in Orkney today but Marwick acknowledges the impact of the Scandinavian language and the way contemporary islanders use it albeit unwittingly: “The speech of Orkney today must be termed Scots, but it is still richly stocked with words which were part and parcel of the Orkney Norn” (Marwick 1929: xxvii). Orcadians could be said to have become increasingly bi-dialectal, speaking an Orcadian influenced Scottish Standard English together with Orcadian dialect of varying broadness and strength in a diglossic speech situation.

Over the last sixty years, Orkney has experienced two significant population changes. During the Second World War, thousands of service personnel were stationed in Orkney. According to Sheena Wenham (2004), the population of Orkney nearly trebled to 60,000 from 1939 –1945. There were military and civilian personnel stationed in Hoy and Flotta on the shores of Scapa Flow. On the island of Sanday, for example, there was a camp at Lopness in the North part of the island. Some of those servicemen met local girls and settled in Orkney while others returned south but remembered Orkney and the way of life on the islands. This opened up the islands to in-migration on a wider scale.

There has been an influx of people into Orkney, from other parts of the UK, for the last four decades. As indicated in section 1.1, the population of Orkney dropped to 17,071 (according to the Census) by 1971. The construction of an oil terminal on the island of Flotta in the 1970s contributed to this reverse the trend of depopulation.

There was a need for skilled technical workers and people moved in from other parts of the United Kingdom in order to take up the posts. Many of those people brought with them new professional skills and technological expertise essential for new industries and services.

The population of Orkney has remained stable for the last 25 years with migratory movement still taking place – especially on the outer islands. On the island of Egilsay for example there is only one Orcadian out of a total population of 24. The larger island of Sanday with a total population of around 500 has only got 210 inhabitants who were born in Orkney. The incoming population has bought small farms – the Orcadian farmers decided to move to the Mainland of Orkney or spend their retirement in Kirkwall.

Projections have made by the General Registrar for Scotland to suggest that the population of Orkney might increase by 15% by 2031. This would mean an increase from 19,220 in 2001 to 22,686 by 2031. Note this quote from the *Orkney Economic Review*, 2008:

“ The natural growth rate of the population (the difference between births and deaths) turned negative around 1997 and has remained so ever since.

Interestingly, though the birth rate has increased over the past two years, and

the death rate has decreased. The significant decline of Orkney's population predicted at the end of the nineties has also been avoided due to the rise in migration to the County." (2008:12)

Watson, in his book, *Being English in Scotland* (2004) likens the study of migration to doing a jigsaw in the dark. He makes a number of important points about the movement of people and the way they influence society. In his research, Watson looked at the reasons behind the decisions of a number of English people to move to Scotland. As a result of interviews with migrants he postulated that the main factors that motivated the migration were employment, lifestyle choice and to accompany their partner in their chosen move to a new location.

Watson says that the motivation for coming to Scotland in the last half of the 20th Century is complex and that the figures he provides only indicate some general trends. He asserts that the English people tend to come individually or as families and do not congregate in communities.

There are parallels between Watson's research and the subject of this thesis. People have moved to Orkney either to take up some form of occupation or to effect change of lifestyle. Whether or not his view that the English people have not created communities holds true in Orkney will be discussed in future chapters.

1.4 Attitude Survey

One of the research questions postulated is:

What are the attitudes of dialect speakers towards their use of Orkney dialect and what social functions do they consider that the dialect fulfills?

After some consideration – and discussion with the supervisory team – a questionnaire was designed with the main purpose to ask people about their attitudes towards dialect. An exemplar of the questionnaire is included as Appendix 1.

The target sample for the questionnaire was 100 and this target was achieved.

Subjects were chosen in a similar way to the recorded interviews. The locations matched the interviews in order to provide a composite picture. This survey does provide quantitative information but qualitative comments were also made which reinforce some of the answers. The breakdown of subjects is as follows:

Age group	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+
	20	30	30	20

The gender breakdown was 60 female and 40 male interviewees. Although this is not an equal number across gender, it can be postulated this provided a representative sample of the attitudes. Results of the survey may be found in Chapters 7 and 8.

A total of 90 surveys were completed face to face, 5 were completed by post and 5 over the telephone.

Attitudes are an integral part of the whole theme of this thesis. The attitudes held by the Orcadian people, and their perception of migrants from outside the islands, are

central to the understanding of this study of the way dialect is used and perceived in Orkney.

1.5 Observation

This is a useful method as no overt form of questioning is needed. The researcher only needs to listen and to observe reactions between participants in a speech act. It is possible to note code-switching, speech accommodation and variations by sitting on a ferry, attending a social event, standing at the corner of a street or shopping at the supermarket or local shop.

When using observation it is essential that an audit trail is kept in order that the research may be validated. A record of dates, times and locations was kept as field notes in order that an audit trail could be established.

1.6 Summary of Chapter One

Any research into social and cultural factors shaping language attitudes and use is likely to include elements of human geography, anthropology and sociology. There will also be an awareness of psychological considerations inherent in the perceptions of the informants and their attitudes and beliefs.

As mentioned the main questions looked at the influence of migrants along with mobility and attitudes. Social networks are also important – how important is it to belong to a particular group? What effect do people from outside the community have on their new place of abode?

Some of those issues will be addressed by data sourced from the attitude survey where people were asked in which circumstances they would code-switch. Others mention this in their recorded interview. In the social network context a number of people volunteered information that would indicate their attitude towards their locality – whether this be an island, parish, town, workplace or social grouping.

Sociolinguistic terms such as social distance and speech events will assist with the understanding of the perceptions of the informants. The ways in which he or she speaks in certain social contexts and the particular speech event that might influence the discourse are important in analysis of the fieldwork.

Diglossic speech situations are central to the content of the thesis. The term “diglossia” refers to the condition when people use two languages or dialects in regular communication or for distinctive and different social purposes. This will be further described in the following chapter.

Using ethnographic techniques along with a questionnaire has led to a wealth of material – which may be examined and analysed both from a qualitative perspective and from quantitative viewpoints. This mixture should provide a composite picture of the use of dialect in Orkney and the features that have influenced its use throughout the islands.

Over 5000 years of history has shaped the Orkney Islands and there have been a number of demographic movements over this time. Although the research questions are based on the effects of the influx of migrants over the past decades, along with the

attitudes of the indigenous people and the influences of mobility, the historical aspects are an integral part of the project. The heritage and culture of Orkney was mentioned by informants throughout the interviews and must be acknowledged.

The following two chapters examine the sources that have shaped the research questions. The Review of the key concepts and research literature, in Chapter 2, covers research and perspectives from a number of sources. In Chapter 3 some insights into folklore and research on Orkney dialect will be considered. Chapter 4 focusses on the methodology used in the context of the thesis.

Fieldwork material is featured in Chapter 5 with comments from informants in different locations throughout the islands and parishes. In Chapter 6 issues such as social variation and code-switching are highlighted within the extended interviews with 9 individuals. Those interviews were more detailed and a wide range of topics was discussed.

The attitude survey is covered in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8. This focused on responses from 100 individuals and provides some quantitative information to supplement and reinforce the responses from recorded interviews.

The final chapter provides an overall summary of the thesis and brings the strands together to provide a composite picture of the social and cultural factors that have influenced the way that Orcadians use dialect in their homeland.

Chapter Two

Review of the key concepts and research literature

2.1 Introduction

This review will cover literature and concepts relevant to the topic of the thesis: perceptions of the social and cultural factors which have influenced the use of dialect in Orkney. As a starting point the sociology of language will cover aspects of language development and acquisition along with diglossia, code-switching and language shift. The next section considers language in Orkney and Shetland with a brief account of the development of the dialect in Orkney. Research work in the neighbouring Shetland Islands provided an opportunity to determine what could be learned from another island community. Comparisons and contrasts will be outlined and ways in which this research could inform similar work in Orkney will be identified. The section will conclude with discussion of the Scots/Scottish Standard English continuum and its relevance to Orkney. The following section will broaden the review and some sociolinguistics approaches from Trudgill, Labov, Milroy and Eckert featured along with some comments from Marshall. The sections on anthropology and social psychology will mention some work by Giles, Tajfel, Joseph et al. after which a brief overall conclusion will follow.

2.1 The Sociology of Language

2.2.1 Conceptualising languages and dialects

Language is a concept universally understood as the process by which people communicate and transfer knowledge and concepts learned through a period of time. Dialect is more complex and interpreted in a number of ways by speakers. It is

necessary to consider social, historical and cultural elements in order to understand the complexities of language and dialect.

Ferguson (1966) defined three categories: Lmaj (major languages such as the official language of a nation) Lmin (minor language spoken by less than 25% of the population) and Lspec which is used for special purposes e.g. in connection with religious scriptures or for literary purposes.

Stewart (1968) described three means of specification: language types, language functions and degree of use. He also proposed a separate category dialect (D):

“a particular D(ialect) may enjoy special status in a national situation (e.g. it may be associated with a special function or used by a special group and perhaps have a special name) (1968:538)

Kloss (1967) referred to Abstand and Ausbau languages. Abstand languages are believed by speakers to be distinct because of linguistic distance. It is a linguistic unit which linguists would refer to as a language even though no text had ever been written in it. An Ausbau language is a sociolinguistic concept defined by development and re-shaping “might have come about by that slow almost imperceptible and quite uncontrolled growth which we are wont to call natural” (1967:29) English, French and German are both Abstand and Ausbau languages.

Polycentric standard languages (Stewart 1968) are found where a language is dominant in two or more geographically separated countries such as British and American English. The relationship between polycentric languages and the ausbau

language is not a static but a dynamic one. Kloss cites the example of Riksmål and Landsmål in Norway. Those are different languages but efforts are underway to make them more similar and be regarded as two forms of one language – a polycentric standard language.

Millar (2005) believes that the model established by Kloss is satisfactory but notes that it does not have a fully developed sense of historicity and some examples of historical development would have been useful. He poses the question – what linguistic features (rather than sociological) does an Ausbau standard have which other dialects of the same language do not? (2005:63)

Joseph (1987) in his historical model states that there is a tendency in all literate communities towards the choice of a particular variety as a “more equal” representative of their language. This model covers a range of motives: acculturation where prestige and power are key features; codification in terms of orthography and grammar; a maturation process and gradual ossification of the mature standard. Joseph contends that the language must be used in conjunction with other standardised languages.

Turning towards the Scots tongue, some people would suggest that Scots is a dialect of English. Millar (2005) says that it is a failed example of language standardisation. “Scots came close to achieving systematic prescriptive regularity only to have its distinctiveness gradually gradually subsumed into the greater whole of written English” (2005:89)

Although Scots was the only dialect of English to borrow independently and widely from other languages of culture, such as French, it declined due to closer relationships with England. In the religious affairs most of the population were Protestant and printed work appeared in English in order to reach a greater audience. Between 1603 (Union of the Crowns) and 1707 when the parliaments were united, many Scots became more anglicized in linguistic and political terms.

There are a number of factors that interplay and models to explain how people choose to embrace different varieties of language. Dialects develop through different stages and as Kloss and Joseph have both suggested, there are complex processes in the ways in which linguistic standards and varieties are eventually accepted as ideological and sociological norms. The movement of people and the multiplicity of languages spoken throughout the world ensures that a variety of dialect and tongues will be used in urban and rural settings.

Millar (2005) encapsulates this state of affairs and summarises the situation in a succinct way:

“..... increased movement has meant that you will find people speaking a variety of languages of recent immigration in almost any city of the globalised world. Although it is very likely that these speakers, or their descendants, will eventually be assimilated into the majority linguistic culture, they will always, it can be predicted, be replaced by new immigrants, speaking their own languages “(2005:205)

2.2.2 Diglossia

The term diglossia was first used by Charles Ferguson in 1959 where he noticed that people would often use more than one language variety in a number of speech events (Ferguson 1972: 232). Diglossia had to be distinguished from the use of Standard English and a regional dialect. Using the concept, the H or high variety would be used in formal situations such as delivering a lecture or a sermon in church. The L or low variety might be used in conversations with family or giving instructions to servants (Fasold 1987:35).

Ferguson looked at features of diglossia through function (when to use it), the prestige value of the chosen variety, acquisition of the language forms, issues of correct usage and standardization. He suggested that diglossia might remain stable for a long time then pressures of change or developments within a country might lead to its demise with a lack of agreement as to which variety might be the most appropriate.

In 1967 Fishman published an article which revised and expanded the concept of diglossia to encompass the use of dialect and different speech varieties. He felt that it should be distinguished from bilingualism and that less emphasis should be placed on the importance of situations with only two language varieties. He also endorsed the views of Gumperz that diglossia exists in societies that employs separate dialects, registers or “functionally differentiated varieties of whatever kind” (Fishman 1972: 92).

Fishman mentions that possibly more than two language varieties can be reserved for specific functions in a society while Ferguson’s view is limited to only two varieties.

Both scholars agree on the functional distribution and have the same concept of H = formal and business with L = less formal and personal. One important question remains: can diglossia be distinguished from standard languages with their dialects? Ferguson (1972: 232) does point out that speakers of regional dialects frequently use their local dialect and standard language in a way that replicates diglossic distribution. Local dialect used at home or with friends and standard for speakers of other dialects or at public functions and events.

The notion of speech community is relevant in this discussion. Fasold suggests that a broad definition is "all those within the borders of the same country who speak the same language" (1987:43). The topic is more fully covered by Labov (1966:125), Hymes (1974:5), Bailey (1974:65) Gumperz (1973:65) and Milroy (1980). Fasold goes on to say that a diglossic community may be defined as a social unit that shares the same High and Low varieties. Each regional dialect distinguishes a different diglossic community and, within each of them, no one uses the standard mode for daily or normal conversation.

So where does diglossia fit in to the Orkney usage situation? From the Ferguson perspective it would appear that he describes the island context very succinctly when discussing the use of dialect in informal situations but standard for formal matters. His view is that aspects of the relationship are diglossic. Looking at the broader speech community however, it might be difficult to define such a concept within the island group. Is the speech community all dialect speakers throughout the islands or could it be brought to the micro level of one island or even one parish? It is more accurate to refer to Orkney as a diglossic speech situation. The language spoken is English but

from place to place different varieties may be heard. The indigenous population speaks varieties of the dialect along with Scottish Standard English while many of the migrants have forms of English related to their place of origin or former locale. The boundaries need to be flexible in order to accommodate the amalgam of people living in Orkney in the 21st Century.

Millar (2005) points out that the examples of diglossia, cited by Ferguson (1972), are of a particular regional variety with a diglossic relationship as a standard. Many varieties may not have a literary heritage or use certain words for certain items.

Dialect was probably learned as a child and the use of H and L forms depend on the function of the communication. Fishman (1967) challenged the view that diglossia could only be present where varieties of the same language were spoken and suggests that different languages can serve different purposes within the same community.

Fasold (1987:41) considered diglossia and bilingualism and discussed examples where both interact such as the case in Paraguay where H dialect is Spanish but the L variety Guaraní is considered a symbol of national identity. He also mentioned situations where diglossia but not bilingualism exists – an example of this being pre-Revolutionary Russia.

Millar (2005:8) poses the question “Are all situations where there is variation in language depending upon social situations inherently diglossic?” Some forms of language may carry more prestige than others. Millar highlights the ways in which the acquisition of literacy and homogenization in language have taken place and suggests that this might have made true diglossia “a thing of the past” (2005:8)

This raises the possibility of re-consideration of Orkney dialect and whether diglossic models should be applied to the local vernacular. Almost all English speakers display contextual variation (Millar: 2005) so is this more the use of different registers rather than true diglossia?

Although the concept of diglossia is a useful way of highlighting the values and prestige associated with different varieties of language and dialect, it is clear that some nations and societies have superseded this means of categorization. As Schiffman (1996) has postulated: “ Other societies which have had a long tradition of language standardization and elitism, coupled with mass literacy, such as the French speaking world, will also have gone beyond diglossia” (1996:Chapter 4)

As previously noted, the term “diglossia” refers to the condition where people use two varieties of language in regular communication for different social purposes. In the Orkney scenario the way of speaking could be referred to as Scottish Standard English mixed with dialect words based on Norse lexical items in a diglossic speech situation. It is interesting to speculate, however, that Orkney dialect use might not be “true diglossia” as highlighted by Millar (2005) earlier in this section.

2.2.3 Code-switching

There are a number of concepts relevant to the subject of this thesis and the process of code-switching is one of the central themes. Code-switching occurs when people switch either between languages or dialect variations. The reasons for code-switching will be looked at in future paragraphs but, in this research, the focus is on the use of Orkney dialect and Scottish Standard English.

One example of code-switching was discussed in the previous section when the work undertaken by Blom and Gumperz (1972) was discussed. In this context the researchers looked at two variations of language used in Norway in different speech situations. Others have also spoken about the choice between two languages.

Holmes (1992:45-47) talks about code-switching for affective functions and she emphasises the significance of ethnic identity in the case of using Jamaican Creole alongside Standard English. Switching might be used for amusement or dramatic effect as well as to ensure effective communication and accurate quotation within a variety of situations. Holmes thinks that skilful code-switching can operate like metaphors to enrich the communicative experience and represent a set of social meanings. One of the points she explores is that people are often unaware of the fact that they are code-switching and may sometimes be embarrassed or apologetic to other participants within the group.

The above examples have looked at switching between different languages. Trudgill (2000:201) talks about bi-dialectism which is an approach that encourages the individual to use non-standard dialect at home or with friends while using standard varieties at school or more formal occasions. According to Trudgill, children should be taught Standard English but also be able to use their own dialect without the fear of ridicule or inferiority. From a young age people should develop an ability to switch from one dialect or language variety to another and understand that both are equally valid and acceptable.

Although the practice of code-switching seems to have been related to the practice of switching between two languages it is also essential to the understanding of the use of

dialect within a community. Although the switch might be between different varieties of the same language or even inter-dialect variations, appreciation of the process within the study of dialect of the Orkney Islands must be acknowledged as the elements of code-switching are vital to the understanding of the situation.

Gardner – Chloros (2009) suggests that code-switching provides a variety of clues as to the social identity of a speaker and explains that people will sometimes switch in order to identify with a peer group. Code-switching is often used for politeness and humour as well as to interact with another interlocutor in a way which is mutually understood. . Gardner-Chloros (2009) highlights the point that code-switching is available between communities and shows considerable internal variation in connected with social groupings. This was evident in the analysis of the fieldwork for this study where informants from different islands and parishes practised variable degrees of code-switching according to the status of the people within a number of social and occupational groupings.

2.2.4 Language Maintenance and Shift

It is important to consider issues of language and dialect death and how the destruction and disappearance of language and dialect occurs. Crystal (2005) says that the language/dialect dichotomy has been addressed many times but two speech systems are considered to be dialects of the same language if they are mutually intelligible. This makes Cockney and Scouse dialects of English, and indeed Orcadian and Shetlandic dialects of Scottish Standard English.

Crystal said, "Dialect death is language death, albeit on a more localised scale. The yearning for continuity will still be there when it comes to considering broader issues of language death. In both cases we are dealing with cultural distinctiveness of a community's character" (2005:38).

Crystal concludes that the growth in linguistic awareness and the fact that issues are now being discussed at a variety of levels - not only at the local and regional level but also at national and international forums. There is an urgent need for long term planning in relation to intervention by governments and other organisations.

In relation to Orkney and other Scottish islands Crystal's views may assist in understanding the situation. While there is more awareness of the individuality of dialects along with a keen interest in the way that people speak, the long-term focus and revitalisation issues might be difficult to transpose into the local situation.

Crystal's view that the dialect is part of the cultural distinctiveness of a community's character is borne out by the findings of this thesis (see chapters 5 and 6). Some of the questions raised by Crystal could be related to aspects of heritage and culture of the islands. Reading Crystal helped the researcher consider forward planning and to form the following questions: what actions could be taken to ensure that the younger generations might be comfortable with the use of dialect; is it possible to engage in long term planning for the continued existence of the Orkney tongue? These questions were part of the dialogue with informants.

Romaine (2007) has some pertinent comments on endangered languages. She was discussing language decline rather than dialect but the points raised apply equally to

the use of dialect. Romaine says that the preservation of a language depends on the maintenance of the group who speaks it and her arguments in favour of reversing the decline are ultimately about preserving cultures and habits.

Romaine (2007) suggests that there is a link between linguistic diversity and biodiversity. Food production sources are related to patterns of social exchange. In her conclusion she says that "we should think about languages the same way as we do other natural resources which need careful planning to ensure their survival; they are vital parts of the complex local ecologies that must be supported if global diversity as well as human cultures and even humanity in general are to be sustained" (2007;115-132). Romaine is right to say that languages cannot be separated from people and their identities and cultures. Distinctiveness in culture and language has formed the basis of human identities and is central to the ways in which perceive their individuality. She concludes her paper by saying that we should treat languages in the same way as we plan the survival of natural resources. "they are vital parts of the complex must be supported if global diversity as well as human cultures and even humanity in general are to be sustained" (ibid).

As noted Romaine is ostensibly discussing endangered languages but it is possible to apply her thoughts and comments to the subject of this thesis. She emphasises the point that reversing language death is associated with the preservation of cultures and habitats. Communities can exist only if there is a viable environment in which they can live. This could apply to Orkney where people moved from small islands in order to sustain their income and way of life. The exodus from small islands such as Egilsay led to a dramatic reduction in the use of dialect within the community. It is difficult to

halt the process of emigration but maybe its effects and aftermath could be handled in a more adept way in order to ensure the survival of the local culture.

Although this research did not focus directly on the threat to language and dialect, it was inevitable that some of those factors would be mentioned as work progressed on the project. Fishman has written the seminal work on the topic of language death and says:

“.... Language is not the only important consideration in connection with the lives of people, nations, communities and regions... there are also demographic, economic, geographic and other essentially co-occurring sociolinguistic factors that must be considered in the study of determinants and consequences of the socio-cultural priorities, values and behaviours of human collectives.....”(2001:3)

Fishman continues by saying that since we have made language into something more important than it might otherwise have been then we must be sympathetic to societies who feel that their own language is threatened. If we do not then this would have:

“....very serious and deleterious social consequences both objectively and perspectively speaking....” (2001:3).

According to Brenzinger and Dimmendaal (1992) language is extinct when there is no longer a speech community using the language. They identify two levels which might impact on language shift and its ultimate demise. Those are the environment - including political, historical, economic and linguistic factors - along with the speech community which encapsulates attitudes and strategies as well as patterns of language

use. Patterns of language choice reflect language attitudes and the use of varieties of language.

It is important to realise that minority languages will only survive if the speakers maintain some loyalty to the language and actively pursue its retention by using and promoting it.

All instances of language death are the result of language shift. Sasse (1992) believed that a holistic approach is necessary in order to consider socio-economic factors and any structural phenomena. He identified three types of phenomena relevant to language death:

External Setting (ES) - cultural, sociological, economic, ethnohistorical

Speech Behaviour (SB) - the regular use of variables

Structural Consequences (SC) – changes in phonology, morphology, lexicon

The Gaelic-Arvariantika Model (GAM) based on Sasse's work in Greece shows the interactions and relationships between ES, SB and SC. Some of the key elements of the model are:

Abandoned Language (Language which is dying out)

T = Target Language (Dominant language which is continued);

Language Transmission Strategies (LTS) = A number of techniques, used by adults to assist their children in first language acquisition such as repetitions, exercise games, corrections, metacommunication, etc.;

Language Decay = Pathological language disintegration;

Semi-Speaker = Member of the post-Language-Transmission break generation with imperfect knowledge of A (the language that is dying out)

Terminal Speaker (Sometimes confused with imperfect speaker) = Last generation speaker.

If this model is applied to Orkney then A = the Orkney Norn; T = the language that follows (Insular Scots); LTS = how the islanders assisted with the development of the first language of their children. Language decay would apply to the disappearance of the Orkney Norn while semi-speakers would have little knowledge of the Norn and Terminal Speakers would be the last people of a generation who could speak the Orkney Norn.

This is summarised very succinctly and effectively by Millar:

“We can therefore state that, as predicted by our interpretation of Sasse’s model, the shift from Norn to Scots was largely instigated by social pressures; Norn became associated with the past (and eventually a peasant past which many Orcadians appeared happy to jettison), while Scots – and eventually Standard English – became associated with the future. As links with Norway loosened throughout the early modern period, it is inevitable that Norn became seen by many as an illiterate language of the old days.”(Millar 2007a)

ES

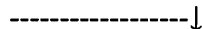
SB

SC

Decision to
abandon A



Interruption of
Language Transmission
by avoidance of LTS for
A and prevention of A
acquisition



↓
Primary Language
Shift



Further loss of
domains of A



Language
decay
and
pathological
phenomena
reduction in
speech
of semi-speakers”



**End of regular
communication in
A**



Use of residue
knowledge for
specialized
purposes =
ritual, joke
group
identification

Residue,
Substratum
knowledge
Continuation
of TA dialect

A summary of GAM – based on Sasse (1992:19)

Research in African communities may be helpful in highlighting some areas relevant to Orkney. Although this research may have been carried out in another continent where social and cultural influences will be in stark contrast to a rural island community in Scotland, it will add another perspective to the understanding of language shift.

During his research in Tanzania, Batibo (1992) discovered 120 ethnic languages and dialects. The status of those varieties was associated with history, culture, military superiority along with demographic predominance and the possession of cattle. An indicator of the prestige of the language or dialect was determined by the degree to which users wanted their children to learn the language. Batibo concluded there was some support for dialect maintenance and local people still had loyalty toward their ethnic roots and the importance of local identity.

Rutland and Okombo (1992) in their studies on language shift among the Sabu of Kenya found a number of mutually intelligible Bantu dialects spoken - even though the language had never received official recognition or appeared in print. Massive language shift has taken place in this region with some language death evident on Rusinga island. There was unevenness in a number of locations and Rutland and Okombo suggest that assimilation has taken place due to governmental intervention. Any revival and preservation would depend on social mobility, motivation and the attitudes of the Sabu people.

In both the above studies there is a resonance with Orkney. As Batibo (1992) recognised there was loyalty to the local roots and support for the continuance of the

local tongue. Rutland and Okombo (1992) suggest that any revivals and preservation of dialects will depend on mobility and also on the attitudes of the local people. In Orkney, as the fieldwork in further chapters will show, the future of dialect in Orkney depends on support and loyalty to the vernacular and the attitudes of the people who speak dialect in Orkney.

2.3 Language in Orkney and Shetland

2.3.1 The origins and development of the Orkney dialect

The Orkney Islands support a population of 19,245 (Census 2001) – distributed among 20 islands. Farming and tourism are the main sources of income with some diversification in craft industries, fishing and alternative energies. The islands have been inhabited for 5000 years and Skara Brae on the Mainland of Orkney is one of the best-preserved Neolithic villages in Europe. Archaeologists have uncovered many sites throughout the islands that tell the story of occupation over many centuries. Recently Iron-Age settlements have been excavated, at Mine Howe in Tenderness, providing clear evidence of early industry and possible trade with the outside world.

It is not possible to determine the language of the Neolithic people at Skara Brae and not even that of the Iron Age dwellers, although some form of Indo-European tongue is possible. According to Barnes (1998) the Picts may have spoken at least two languages: P- Celtic and Q- Celtic. P- Celtic was the language spoken in Strathclyde and Wales with Q – Celtic related to early Old Irish. There would have been some Irish Gaelic as monks inhabited some of the islands such as Papa Westray and Papa Stronsay. The arrival of the Vikings in the 9th Century heralded the appearance of a new language. Based on West Norse, the Orkney Norn developed and was the

predominant language of the islands for about 700 years. From the 15th Century onwards, however, the influence of Scottish English increased and, since the middle of the 18th Century it has been the language of Orkney.

What is the development history and current state of the Orkney dialect today?

Dialect is spoken in Orkney albeit with a number of variations according to location and age group. It is not possible to provide a definitive answer as this would necessitate a major research study. Results from the questionnaire – reported in Chapters 7 and 8 - provide a guide to the amount of dialect used in everyday life. As Millar (2007a), Johnston (1997) and others have discussed there is a vibrant interest in the continued use of the vernacular in Orkney. It will be postulated that the dialect is under threat from migration, media and movement of people. Conversely, if dialect users have the resolve to continue using the vernacular then there are levels of optimism to suggest that dialect will maintain a strong presence within the speech of the population.

Scholarly and popular conceptions of key terms in connection with the thesis must be addressed. Orcadian people, of course, will not recognise the differences in terminology between dialect and accent or the meaning of standard language. They realise that the way people speak varies from island to island but the meaning of style, register and variant will not be instantly recognisable. Some Orcadians will not acknowledge the connection between the Scots language and the vernacular spoken in Orkney.

2.3.2 Prior studies on Orkney dialect

A more detailed account of studies on the Orkney dialect is included in Chapter 3.

This section is an introduction to studies and research carried out in Orkney. Marwick (1929) undertook his research on the Orkney Norn and this provides the corpus of knowledge of the Norn along with Barnes (1998).

Since the original publication of *The Orkney Norn*, a number of Scotland-wide surveys of lexical use have come to completion. Since the 1920s, however, *The Scottish National Dictionary* (Grant and Murison 1929-76) has been completed. This work provided a greater depth in our understanding of the use of Scots lexis. In combination with work associated with the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Mather and Speitel 1985) it is useful in giving an overall picture of the linguistic situation in Scotland. Large-scale patterns sometimes obscure smaller-scale patterns; this may cause some anomalies in regions such as Orkney which have relatively small populations but, historically, considerable variation in word and meaning from place to place. As Millar (2007a) has said; “For the scholar of Orkney dialect in particular, there is little use in seeing that a word is found in Orkney; he or she would like to know in which islands or parishes a word is found.”

Gregor Lamb’s *Orkney Wordbook* (1988) has provided a guide to the modern dialect used in Orkney. Although it was not intended to be as scholarly a work as Marwick (1929), it is produced for the same purpose. Van Leyden and Lange undertook research for doctorates on the Orkney dialect and culture while Millar and Johnson have examined the dialect as part of Insular Scots. Further material on all those mentioned forms part of Chapter 3.

It might be useful to quote Millar (2007b) at some length here as he summarises the situation in Orkney in terms of the paucity of research on Orkney dialect:

“..... hardly any scholarly work has been carried out on the lexis of Orcadian dialect (or, indeed, the dialect as a whole). This is in marked contrast to the Shetland dialects, which have received considerable interest since the 1950s, including both a modern dictionary and grammar. I can only say that much – not all – of what is said for Shetland can also be said for Orkney (although the specifically Norn features appear to be much better preserved in Shetlandic than in Orcadian). There is obviously a great need to carry out surveys of local lexical use; especially since the local dialects of the Mainland and Scapa Flow regions in particular must inevitably have been affected by the discovery and exploitation of North Sea oil since the 1960s. It is to be hoped that scholars will take up these tasks in the near future: there is pressing need for such studies.” (2007b;14)

Millar mentions studies carried out in Shetland and the next section will examine some research from this archipelago.

2.3.3 A near analogue: Shetland

A number of research projects have been undertaken in connection with the development of the dialect in the islands. This section will focus on aspects of the development of the dialect in the light of contact theories. It will then cover aspects of change and the remnants of the Norn and will conclude with the use of dialect in Shetland today.

In his essay on the origins of the Shetland dialect Millar (2008) utilises the colonial model as used by Trudgill (2004) in an effort to highlight the ways in which the present day dialect was formed in the early 19th Century from a supra regional kione of the 16th/17th century tongue. Trudgill (2004) identified the following stages in new dialect formation:

Mixing – the initial linguistic state

Levelling – bringing out common features

Unmarking – reducing the number of variants

Interdialect development – features arising from interaction

Reallocation – variants accepted as social variants

Focusing – process by which the new variety is accepted

Mufwene (2001) has pointed out the founder effect the nature of any dialect is formed early on in history by its founders.

Millar think that something akin to new dialect formation must have taken place in Shetland and points out that some features of Trudgill's model (2004) – such as marking, unmarking and reallocation – are represented. He concludes:

“Moreover we can postulate the native speaker death of Norn in the late 18th Century led to a realignment of native-speaker Scots, with an originally non-native speaker variety of Scots being incorporated within it, thus altering profoundly the nature of the dialect” (2008:265)

Knoolhuizen (2009) supports Millar's use of the theory of new-dialect formation (Trudgill 2004) although it might not account for the range of vowel qualities in Shetland Scots. Knoolhuizen suggests that Sasse's model (1992) of target languages, and focussing on substratum influence from a language that is abandoned, might be helpful in explaining the development of dialect in Shetland.

According to Knoolhuizen (2010) the Shetland people had a need to change their language and to learn Scots "just to get by in daily life outside their home" (2010:97). There is little linguistic evidence of the death of Norn due to lack of written text. Contact with Scots language was promoted because of the role of Scottish merchants and the numbers of people from the Scottish Mainland who settled in Shetland.

Melchers (1980) acknowledges the sense of identity with Scandinavia through place names, music and culture. She noted in her research during 1979 that young Shetland people recognised 65 words from the Norn language. She has described language death as "never accepted" and clarifies this by highlighting the knowledge of the people:

"... The awareness of their Scandinavian language is still deep and alive in the Shetlanders. My informants, none of whom were linguists, suggested various words to me as "possibly being one of your Scandinavian words" and they were always right" (1980:261)

Sundkvist (2007) contends that two languages exist in Shetland – SSE spoken with a local accent and the Shetland dialect. He refers to the islanders as "dialect switchers"

or “ style drifters” and refers to Melchers (1985:97) who stated “ The language situation in Shetland is clearly one of bilingualism, or rather bidialectism i.e. there is an either-or choice rather than slight changes along a continuum”

Sundkvist believes that the choice is determined by the interlocutor with dialect for Shetlanders and SSE for the outsider. The locus of the shift is Lerwick as this the most urbanised and, therefore, most accustomed to switching. He identifies a large inventory of vowel phonemes compared with Mainland accents and says that the Lerwick accent shows a highly localized process – vowel softening or vowel mutation – and it is this that makes the Shetland way of speaking distinctive. (2007:00)

In her research Bugge (2010) examined the role of the family in inter-generational transmission of Shetland dialect vocabulary. From a list of words beginning with the letter “h” and based on three separate dictionaries of the Norn, Bugge chose 10 families and undertook word recognition tests. Older informants recognised more dialect words than younger informants and there was a large variation within each age group. A total of 36 members of 10 families recognised 55 out of 64 words while the youngest informants (born after 1980) recognised 25 words.

Age seemed to be the most definitive social factor in determining the survey score while family background was an important factor. Family affiliation was a key factor used by school pupils when referring to the use of the Shetland dialect.

Bugge commented:

“Informants saw Shetland as a bi-dialectal community, most of the informants claimed to use both a dialect variety and a more standardised variety in their daily lives” (2010:88)

Smith and Durham (2012) in their research on generational change in Shetland noted rapid dialect levelling in Lerwick with half of the younger speakers using local forms and the other half using standard variants. The process of knappin was increasing prevalent (when people use an affectation to increase the prestige element within a given speech situation)

Smith and Durham believe that bi-dialectal is different from bilingual and pointed out that speakers have a variety of styles within their speech repertoire. Only half of the informants switched styles and there was a decrease in traditional variants. They postulated that dialect obsolescence was well advanced in the community. Some of the factors contributing to this were in-migration, globalization, attitudes and the standardizing of norms. They concluded:

“Only half the young speakers in Shetland were bi-dialectal so dialect in Lerwick is subject to dialect obsolescence” (2012:80)

From a local historian’s perspective Smith (1996) argues that Shetlanders spoke the Norn language in the 16th Century but he suggests that they were proficient at other languages as well. He contends that Shetlanders chose not to speak the Norn and were not coerced into losing the language. Shetlanders would have been multilingual

speaking Norn, Scots and Danish. “ I can well imagine their descendants were equally inventive in switching between dialect and Standard English” (1996:37)

With regard to present day dialect Smith thinks that it is not something for polite company and it is not used on the local radio station (Radio Shetland) for serious matters. According to Smith, Shetlanders are uneasy about accepting their language as a literary language. He is confident, however of the longevity and the value of the dialect of his native islands:

“ The modern Shetland dialect is a fine, flexible variant, still full of life and potential” (1996:42)

Nihtinen (2011) considered the promotion of dialect in Shetland and initiatives such as Shetland ForWirds which was a group set up to raise the status and enhance the profile of the dialect. There were links with the tourism industry through the use of dialect sayings on products. Nihtinen contends that Shetland speech is seen as a bond carrying cultural values and the dialect is promoted as a regional rather than ethnic notion. She concludes:

“ Shetlanders’ self understanding has been presented and understood as more ambivalent than it is in reality because of the perceived centrality of language in defining authenticity or cultural differences as opposed to dialect and other cultural markers” (2011:312)

The research work carried out in Shetland has covered historic backgrounds in terms of influences of the Norn and how this developed into the Shetland dialect of the present day. Orkney experienced similar events and this has been covered by Marwick (1929) and Barnes (1998) but the research by Millar, Knooihuisen, Melchers and Sundkvist has a more forensic approach and greater depth. It would be useful if similar research could take place in Orkney. Bugge's work on inter-generational transmission and the recognition of Norn words in the 21st century produced some revealing information with regard to the ways in which families pass on the dialect to their children. Smith and Durham undertook research on the language of youth and the changes which have taken place over recent times that may lead to dialect obsolescence. The methodology employed by Bugge and Smith and Durham could assist with the understanding of the changes that have taken place in Orkney.

Orkney and Shetland differ in geographical distance from Scotland and this has been mentioned in the above research. Orkney has experienced the influx of migrants over the past six decades and it could be argued that this influence has not been so great in Shetland. This needs to be confirmed by appropriate research and the comparisons in terms of demographic movement.

It could be argued that Shetland islanders value their dialect to a greater extent than Orkney and display more loyalty to their vernacular than their counterparts in Orkney. Initiatives such as Shetland ForWirds have been formed and, as Bugge, Smith and Millar have shown through the research discussed earlier, the people of Shetland acknowledge their Norse origins and have a pride and an interest in the way they speak.

Both island groups have dialect speakers with words derived from the Norm. The ties that bind Orkney and Shetland in economic terms such as the fishing industry and the oil developments are well developed. As the research in Shetland has shown there are many facets of language and dialect use to be explored. Orkney could benefit from similar research and comparisons made between projects would add to the understanding of the use of the vernacular in both archipelagos.

2.3.4 The Scots/Scottish Standard English continuum: its relevance to Orkney

Dorian (1980) undertook fieldwork in Embo, on the east coast of Sutherland in the Highlands of Scotland. She was interested in a small Gaelic community here with its origins stretching back to the Highland Clearances when many crofters were forced to leave their land in order that the rich landowners could rear sheep.

Some of those people became fishermen and tried to make enough money to live. Their life was a struggle exacerbated by the lack of proper harbours and the fishery infrastructure. Their Gaelic language was different from Book Gaelic and this set them apart. They were seen as low status and felt impoverished. Their situation was little improved when Dorian began her studies in the community. She found that some of the villagers almost lacked the confidence to talk to the outside world. This was a case of a small community trying to cling on to a dying variety of a language with little support and also a lack of recognition. The Gaelic speaking East Sutherland fisher folk have in one sense been proven wrong in that some of the youngest members of their families have begun to berate them for choosing not to transmit the ancestral language and allowing it to die.

Looking at the connection between Embo and Orkney there might seem little in common. On closer examination, however, the situation in smaller islands such as North Ronaldsay, might be similar. In those communities there are native dialect speakers who might only practise their island dialect in conversation with a small number of like minded individuals. In this way the fragility of the variety is exposed and the nuances of the island tongue could be lost through the lack of use.

From the Gaelic language the question of the Scots language must also be considered. Some people might take the view that it is not a language while others believe that it should be recognised as such. One of the main protagonists of this standpoint is McClure (1998) who has written widely on the question of why Scots matters to the people of Scotland.

McClure (1998) has said that the Scots language is a priceless treasure and has been of strong cultural, literary and intellectual importance, which has helped to shape the character of the Scottish people. He speaks about the way in which the language has been devalued and the threats posed through political and social pressure. According to McClure, other countries such as Iceland, Finland and Denmark along with the Faroe Islands have built up their languages so why is not possible for Scotland to do the same? (1988:65)

According to McClure, the solution lies in the education system along with the media and the resources are already in existence ready to be tapped. Some might think that this would be associated with nationalist movements but McClure thinks that it is "a matter of purely cultural or historic interest." (1988:67)

As McClure has pointed out “an independent or even semi-independent Scottish government would, it is hoped, give high priority to encouraging the two native languages. Scots ... both the regional dialects and the mainstream national literature - could be taught and used in the schools as official policy”. (1988:70) With the Scottish Parliament being led by SNP , who have a demonstrable commitment to both Gaelic and Scots, it is possible that more credence will be given to the Scots language. In Orkney there have been some initiatives to encourage the children to recognise and look at dialect words. Whether such moves lead to the increase in the use of those words is debatable and could be the subject of further research. From a cultural and historical perspective, however, the inclusion of such studies within the curriculum can be viewed as a positive step. More action needs to be taken on the ways in which dialect is used and it is hoped that this thesis will highlight some of the issues behind the practical applications of the dialect and the value judgements of the local populace towards their “mither tongue.”

Aitken (1979) notes that many Scots speakers operate Scots and English bases as different registers using one or the other under different social circumstances. He calls people who switch clearly from one to the other dialect switchers and he calls those who change in a less predictable and fluctuating way “style drifters”. He considers that the higher social status or the greater formality of any speakers would normally be accompanied by a shift towards the English pole of the system. In the 17th century, the speech passed through a stage where there was “ rather inconsistent vacillation between the native and imported southern options. This is similar to the speech of working class Scots style drifters today” (1979:93).

Aitken highlighted the Scottish Education Department report of 1952 and their pronouncements and appraisals on the exemplar of English generally acceptable to educated Scots. This looked at words and phrases of genuine dialect whether of the Borders or of Buchan which, says the document, “should find a place in the classroom” Conversely however, the report expresses the hope that “slovenly perversion of the dialect will be excluded” (English in Secondary Schools, Edinburgh S.E.D. 1952, page 6)

On accent tolerance Aitken expresses optimism for the language situation – becoming less prescriptive or restrictive and says that, in an ideal world, accent would not matter, noting that “People would concern themselves about what other people said and not about the accent in which they said it” (1979:115). He mentioned the young people at Edinburgh University in 1979 who seemed less concerned about accents than his generation. His view is that the media could promote dialect by “more favour to the more Scots and vernacular kinds of accent than they at present do” (1979:115).

In his concluding paragraph Aitken says that the picture is not wholly negative and, despite the Anglicisation of Scottish speech which has gone on through recent centuries, there is still a vast amount of Scots material in everyday spoken usage of both middle and working classes and “in our written and oral traditions generally” (1979:116). Although Aitken’s work on the use of vernacular and the Scots language is relevant and well presented, it is important to realise that this was written in 1979 and, therefore must be considered in the context of language and dialect use at that time.

2.4. Classical sociolinguistics

Trudgill has some trenchant views on the values placed on dialect and the attitudes held by others. He says that we must rid ourselves of the idea that speaking anything other than Standard English is a sign of ignorance and displays a lack of sophistication. If people do not realise that this is the case then “much of what linguistic richness and diversity that remains in this country may be lost.” (2000:136)

The inevitability of language and dialect change is featured in the work of a number of writers. As societies change and people became more restless for new places to explore, local cultures and communication patterns will also be transformed. Some considerable demographic movement has occurred in Orkney since the Viking invasions around 800 AD. This thesis considers the situation at present and what might happen as a result of the social and cultural features that have accompanied the migration.

Trudgill is convinced that the attitudes people hold are paramount and thinks that we can “work against that kind of dialect loss which is the result of attitudinal factors” (2000:196). One of the main problems seems to be the mechanics and the strategies posing this challenge. It would appear that the problem can only be addressed by the users themselves and they need to gain the confidence to use the local variations. Attitudes towards the use of dialect are at the heart of this thesis. People may not want to use their dialect due to lack of confidence in speaking it. They fear ridicule and may think that it lacks prestige. They might feel ashamed or even have experienced humiliation when using their local way of speaking (Trudgill 2002:134). According to Trudgill, respect for a dialect of a locality is also important. Dialects are strongly

linked to cultures and in some European countries such as Norway and Switzerland dialects have been defended and this has not impeded their development in the modern world.

Geographical mobility and the movement of people to cities can lead to dilution and diminution of dialect. In the towns of Kirkwall and Stromness dialect features, that are still evident in the North Isles of Orkney, are modified and levelled. This occurs when a new dialect appears that is uniform and has none of the unique features shared by traditional dialects. The strong vowel sounds of the island of Westray are sometimes blended with a more general Orcadian way of speaking while still sounding distinctive. Trudgill (2002: 30) has spoken of the effects of mobility and he thinks that one of the ways in which dialect loss can be arrested is to resist the negative attitudes towards dialect.

The role of the media is often mentioned as an influential factor on the way that people speak. Whether this is from the multitude of television programmes from all over the world or the radio stations providing a wide variety of shows aimed at the younger generation, people are often persuaded that they should emulate the speech of the presenters and characters appearing on such programmes. Trudgill (2000:12) admits that television plays an important role but suggests that it does not affect the grammatical structure. “You do not talk to the TV – and even if you do, it can’t hear you”. The situation in Orkney might be different and some people would contend that young people in Orkney have almost adopted a quasi-American speech as a result of exposure to some programmes such as *Friends*. In remote island communities the

television plays a fairly prominent role in the lives of many people due to the lack of “live” shows.

One of the most prominent sociolinguists in the world today is William Labov. His work in New York (1966) and Martha's Vineyard (1963) has been instrumental in introducing the subject to a worldwide audience. Labov's research in New York centred on the pronunciation of the non - prevocalic /r/. He suggested that its use was spreading due to social reasons with the lower classes taking up a feature associated with a class above them. Labov suggested that it was the lower/middle class women that were instrumental in the diffusion of /r/ in the wider community. They seemed to be conscious of its prestige value and they worked hard to copy upper middle class speech (Graddol 1999).

In his earlier studies Labov (1963) examined the raised nucleus in the /ay/ pronunciation. This has been termed the "Canadian Raising" and various island dialects have been studied by Wolfram and Schilling- Estes (1998). Labov's search area was Martha's Vineyard, an island off the coast of Massachusetts, with a growing tourist trade and seasonal work in the summer months. The local fishermen saw this as a threat to local control of life on the island while others saw the summer trade as a means of income and development. The ideological struggle was within the island and the fishermen and young people tried to resist the changes by showing a high rate of nucleus raising. They were trying to preserve the traditional way of life through the varieties of language used on the island.

How does Labov inform the subject of the thesis? The use of /r/ as a prestige marker could be linked to the use of dialect and the way some Orkney people decide to use SSE in order to impress or appear to be more refined in their own perception.

Martha's Vineyard has some common points with Orkney. The shared island status is fundamental, but there are other factors. Tourist trade could influence how the local people address the visitors.

2.4.1 Social Network Theory

In one of the first studies to apply social network analysis, Barnes (1954) argued that the organisation of social life in an island parish in Western Norway could not be understood primarily, in terms of institutional structures such as occupational groups – villagers or fishing crews. He examined a number of interpersonal ties in connection with kinship, friendship or personal acquaintances and perceived this as the basis of a social class system – a social network. Bott (1957) found in his study of conjugal relationships that the allocation of duties and tasks were more likely to be linked to networks with which the couples were involved rather than social class. According to Mitchell (1974), social network is more concerned with patterns of relationships rather than the content of those relationships. In his research on of a dispute at a zinc mine in Zambia, Kapferer (1969) was able to find linkages among a set of individuals. Those links answered some questions about the conduct of the dispute.

In Davies (2008), Hage and Harary (1983) are reported as having developed formal analyses that “can yield results that could not have been obtained by assisted common sense” (2008:181). Davies concludes “it can be argued that the best use of social

network analysis is an instructive paradigm and a method of working that diverts attention to a particular kind of data (2008:184).

The foregoing research discussed by Barnes (1954) has been used as a platform for the research undertaken in this thesis. The combined features of friendship and family ties within rural settings and the ways in which linkages among a set of individuals can be utilised within the context of Orkney where communities, islands and parishes are intertwined with familial and occupational networks.

Social Network Analysis is a means of measuring the closeness of relationships within a community. This is a way of identifying how speakers use language variation to signal different kinds of social identity or social aspiration. Formal and informal relationships are covered. Friendship, family, work, neighbourhood or ethnicity may influence such relationships. Multiplex networks are those where the same people encounter one another at a variety of places such as at church or social gatherings. Uniplex networks, by contrast, apply where the individual does not see his or her counterparts outside the workplace. Networks may be close knit and multiplex and dense with everybody knowing each other and in regular contact, or loose knit and sparse linked only by uniplex ties with contacts outside their own communities.

Milroy (1980) carried out some work in Northern Ireland based on Social Network Theory. She investigated three working class communities in Belfast: Ballymacarrett, Hammer and Clonard. Milroy lived in the communities in Belfast and built up a rapport with the people. Using a Network Strength Score (NS) based on local knowledge she measured linguistic variables based on the pronunciation of standard

and non-standard forms. It was found that there was a high NS associated with the use of vernacular or non-standard forms.

Males who used vernacular regularly belonged to tight knit social networks and women used less non-standard forms. The situation was reversed in Hammer and Clonard and this was explained by observing the high unemployment rate in the area. Men had to leave the area to find work and the young Clonard women all worked together forming dense, multiplex networks.

L. Milroy and J. Milroy (1978) did suggest that particular kinds of networks would either inhibit or enhance linguistic variation in a community. The men of Ballymacarett who worked in the shipbuilding yards were more likely to reinforce the norms of non-standard dialect and be less responsive to change.

Although this thesis did not embrace the sociolinguistic study of linguistic variables there are many relevant aspects of the social network analysis. In some of the remote islands such as North Ronaldsay, there could be said to be a multiplex and dense network where people tend to do everything together. The town of Kirkwall on the other hand could be described as more uniplex in character with people only seeing each other at the workplace. The dialect is used in both places but the situation would differ from the scenario in Northern Ireland in that the language variation would be under threat in smaller communities such as North Ronaldsay because of the close knit nature which may be seen as oppressive, insular and fragile.

2.4.2 Eckert: Communities of Practice

Eckert (2005) outlined three waves of analytic practice. The first wave of variation studied was undertaken by Labov (1966) where he established correlations between linguistic variables and primary socioeconomic categories – class, sex and age. Complications of categorization schemes pointed out the need for explanation for the variations found in the culture of class and gender. The second wave focussed on ethnographic studies of variation such as Labov's studies of Martha's Vineyard (Labov 1963), Gal's work in language shift in a Hungarian speaking village in Austria (Gal 1979) and Holmquist who worked in Ucieda – a peasant village in the Spanish Pyrenees (Holmquist 1985). Eckert undertook work in Detroit (Eckert 1989; Eckert 2000) including studies of schools in the area. She identified two opposed social categories – Jocks and Burnouts – based on different cultures and with contrasting attitudes, network and identities. Eckert says that those ethnographic studies suggests that patterns of variation are not set in childhood but change as life progresses; social stratification occurs in localised ways and patterns of variation within one community are linked to wider communities through a geographical area.

Eckert describes the third wave as the stylistic perspective and introduces the construct of community of practice. This was developed by Lave and Wenger (1991; Wenger 2000) and used by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet in their work on language and gender (1992;2003). A community of practice is:

“an aggregate of people who come together on a regular basis to engage in some enterprise. A family, a linguistics class, a garage band, roommates, a sports team,

even a small village. In the course of their engagement, the community of practice develops ways of doing things – practices.” (Eckert 2005:16)

The practices involve shared orientation and Eckert argues that the social order comes down to the nature of communities of practice. Age, class, gender and ethnicity are all manifested within in the combinations of practices in which people participate. She sets out examples such as women taking part in exercise classes and middle class people playing bowls. Within communities of practice people construct identities and in linguistic terms, create distinctive ways of speaking.

“ These ways of speaking are a key to the production of personae, and personae in turn are particular social types that are quite explicitly located in the social order” (Eckert 2005:17)

Within the communities of practice approach the focus is on the meanings that motivate specific use of vernacular utterances rather than defining variations in terms of the speakers who use variables. As Eckert postulates:

“ Speakers continually imbue linguistic variability with social meaning, and as far as I know, inconsequential social differences don’t correlate with linguistic variables” (Eckert 2005:30)

She continues by arguing that variation has the potential to take on meaning and concludes by saying that a focus on social meaning requires that “ we begin with a view not just to regional variables and changes in progress, but to variables that appear to be exploited for social meaning, whatever their origins” (2005:31)

Eckert's communities of practice where speakers attach meaning to their use of speech was applicable to this study as it assists with the explanations of the ways in which the use of dialect in Orkney is influenced by the purpose of the communication and the meaning attached to it.

2.4.3 Discussion

Marshall (2004) in his Huntly research was interested in the adaption of regional standard features over local vernacular features and how this may be resisted. The local vernacular in this part of North East Scotland is the "Doric" and the area surrounding Huntly is a farming community. The townsfolk have increased geographical mobility and improved transport links and have, therefore, been exposed to the more urbanised forms of language and attitudes.

Parallels may be drawn between the Huntly study and the subject of this thesis.

Orkney is a rural community with farming as the main economic activity. The dialect is a form of Insular Scots and the islands have experienced social change over the last 60 years through better transport links and geographic mobility. This has influenced the way that people use dialect and their attitudes to changes.

Marshall (2004) has considered a number of theoretical backgrounds and previous research and the ways in which those relate to a non-hierarchical community. This will now be considered in the context of how those approaches have informed the study of Orkney dialect within this thesis.

Marshall identifies the way in which a person's social networks are not only the result of external factors but also reflect the personal choices of that person. Milroy (1980) sees social class as a large scale category – not easy to pin down. She identifies age and sex as indicators of group allegiance in which the individual has no choice.

Marshall considers Eckert (2000) and her work at Belten High School. Communities of practice describe the ways in which people come together and share values, beliefs and ways of talking. He acknowledges the value and strengths of such theories and how they relate to different communities.

The links between language and geography (Trudgill 1983) (Trudgill and Chambers 1998) take the effects of terrain into account along with population and distance. Those factors are important when researching rural communities.

According to Marshall a model which takes cognisance of attitudinal factors would enhance understanding of dialect maintenance. The need to recognise the perceptions of individual speakers is paramount. He provides a model (Marshall 2004:229) where a range of factors such as location and attitudes are included along with age and social class index. The structure of local social networks, people's attitudes, social class structures differ from rural to urban networks.

Marshall concluded that the Huntly study “ has shown that, at least for this rural community, there is no correlation between network indices and dialect maintenance.” (2004:231). He questions the validity of the social network approach and the value of such a model in research in the vernacular of rural and urban communities:

“ This may call into question the validity of social networks as a rigorous tool, not only in rural but in urban areas” (2004:231)

2.5 Anthropology, Ethnography and other relevant studies

While sociology looks at social constructs and social psychology examines the views of individuals and how they interact with the structure of society, anthropology is more concerned with the values of socio-cultural groups and the cultural rules of behaviour that governs those values.

The methodology used by anthropologists usually involves participant observation within an ethnographic framework. Living within the community and becoming part of it enables them to examine the ways in which the people behave within the place. At the same time is imperative that a detached approach is followed in which the researcher is able to adopt a stance that will not compromise his or her position.

Blom and Gumperz (1972) spent time in the Norwegian village of Hemmersberget looking at the way that villagers used the two languages: **Ranamål and Bokmål**. The former tended to be used for everyday conversations while Bokmål was employed in more formal situations. Villagers having intimate or personal conversations would use Ranamål but Bokmål was the chosen variety for official community affairs. The use of Ranamål symbolised friendship roles between individuals.

Other work in anthropologically-centred studies have been carried out by Gal (1979) in Austria where she lived for an year with a local family, and Dorian (1981) who spent a number of years in Embo in the Scottish Highlands where she concentrated on the use of Gaelic in a small community.

Living and working in a community is central to the study of language and dialect from an anthropological perspective. Listening, observing and interpreting the values of people can provide comprehensive material for researchers. As Trudgill and Chambers (2002:48) have said, however, one must guard against bias and the paradox which might influence the responses of the informants. A certain level of detachment is essential in situations where there is a familiarity between researchers and their subjects.

Fasold commented “Whether a person thinks of herself as a member of the same community as the person she is talking to, whether the other person is thought of as a visitor in the speech community or vice versa, and the presence or absence of conflict between their communities all work together to determine the degree and direction of accommodation” (1987:207).

The anthropological approach seems well suited to this thesis as the researcher is a native of the islands living and working in the community. There is the researcher paradox to consider where personal views and levels of friendship must not detract from or adversely affect the results of any fieldwork. It would be fair to say that a combination of sociological, social psychological and anthropological approaches are appropriate for the study of dialect in Orkney because “ the most thorough understanding of language choice as a sociolinguistic phenomenon seems to come from incorporating the insights of sociology and social psychology into an anthropological framework.” (Fasold, 1987:209)

Swann (in Graddol et al 1997; 314) says that the speakers' choice of language has something to do with maintaining a certain type of social identity. This can also be related to the use of dialect in a rural or island community.

Paul Kerswill in a number of his works, (1994; 2002; 2005; 2006) has focused on the social class aspects of language use, dialect levelling and new dialect formation. He has recently been engaged in a project in London where his studies looked at dialect levelling. He concentrated on the age group 16 – 19 using qualitative and quantitative methods and examined the origins of linguistic change in London's social mix, to gain a critical understanding of dialect levelling in Britain.

Kerswill has also researched the development of language in Milton Keynes (1996). This new city in Buckinghamshire has been populated by overspill from London and the south of England. New accents are developing and although they do share common features with other English accents, they exhibit individuality and the younger members of the community seem to be the main source of development for this way of speaking.

Kerswill looked at the increase in geographical mobility and the social changes in recent years and how this has affected the way people speak through pronunciation and attitudes towards it use. For his research, Kerswill focused on children from three specific age groups. He recorded them both using spontaneous speech and the elicitation of specific words.

He discovered that older children do most of the work in dialect formation. He does not seem to mention much about the use of dialect among the adult population. One of the generalisations he puts forward is that "what we see is possibly a sign of things to come: new towns are perhaps the vanguard of dialect levelling in England as a whole" (1996:299). Could this dialect levelling take place or is it happening in Orkney and is it a result of mobility and the way in which the population has changed? Dialect levelling in the islands may be compared with London or Milton Keynes but this could be explored in further research work which is outwith the boundaries of this thesis.

2.6 Social Psychology of Language

2.6.1 Attitudes

Attitude surveys provide information on current community thoughts, beliefs, preferences, desires and opinions. (Baker, 1995) Attitudes are a convenient way of describing and explaining behaviour and they also assist in predicting behaviour.

Attitudes can be measured and researched by document analysis, autobiographies, matched guise techniques, interviews and case studies. For the purposes of this research, interviews were undertaken along with case studies (in the form of extended interviews). Baker (1995:27) suggests that some quantitative research often raises issues of over-generalisation and isolation. The interview and observation techniques used in qualitative research, on the other hand, lead to the participants providing the explanations which formulate the basis for understanding the evidence gathered therein.

There have been a number of research projects undertaken covering attitudes to specific languages. Some examples are: Attitudes to Welsh (Jones 1949,1950); Davies (1986); Attitudes to Gaelic (MacKinnon, 1977, 1981); Attitudes to Irish (CILAR,1975), O’Riagain and O’Gliasain (1984); Attitudes to English (Sharp et al, 1973) and Attitudes to Norwegian (Svanes,1987)

Tajfel (1981) looked at attitude change within the field of community relationships and suggested circumstances that might affect such change. Those included changes in connection with community integration where the relationships are close and intimate. There are similarities between this approach and this thesis as the island and parish communities exhibit a range of relationships which are warm and bonded by a common interest of speaking dialect.

In the sphere of attitudes within families, Ryan (1979) suggested that children of bilingual parents exhibit contexts that accompany the second language. Positive and negative attitudes may be formed in connection with both languages. In Orkney this could be demonstrated where children of mixed marriages – where one parent is Orcadian and the other is a migrant – often employ traits from the dialect and SSE. Baker (1995) contends that “the influence of parental language attitudes on children’s’ language attitudes is likely to be considerable” (1995:109) He maintains that there is congruence between parental and children’s attitudes. Methods contributing to this congruence include: identification, rewards, punishments, and social comparison.

Katz (1960), in consideration of functional theory, outlined four functions for an individual's attitudes. Those covered: instrumental – where there was some reward and related to prestige or employment; ego-defensive – where attitudes could lead to insecurity and anxiety; value expressive- connected with personal values and the concept of self: and knowledge – in this function knowledge of a particular culture or social organisation can affect attitudes toward the variation of language or strength of dialect used.

Joseph (2004) highlights the ambiguity of the mother tongue and points out that it has been referred to as the language or dialect that one grew up with but is often used to describe the language learned in school. According to Joseph, the mother tongue is “central to the construction of a speaker's linguistic identity” (2004:185)

Tajfel (1978) defined social identity as part of the individual's self concept which derives from knowledge of membership of a social groups (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance which is attached to that membership.

Tajfel (1982) believes that the processes of social identification “ which can also reach great heights of intensity – need to be used as an explanation for the continuing, long-lasting group affiliations which often contain motives and beliefs that are contradictory and conflicting” (1982:505)

Horwitz and Rabbie (1982) contends that a group is a social unit capable of being acted upon or being moved rather than simply being a social category while Turner

(1982) argues that different situations tend to switch on different conceptions of self so that “social stimuli are constructed and social behaviour controlled in the appropriately adaptive manner” (1982:20)

2.6.2 Accommodation Theory

Social psychological research tends to be more person-centred rather than society-centred. Individual motivations rather than social structures would be considered and the focus in language choice terms would be on the influences on the personal level of influence. The main work mentioned in this context has been carried out by Simon Herman (1968) and by Howard Giles and associates (1973) (1977).

Herman talks about speakers finding themselves in more than one psychological situation simultaneously. He mentions a situation in which the speaker is faced with three different options. One option is concerned with the speaker’s personal needs and the other two are linked with other social groupings. The speaker might be pulled in different directions by his/her desire to speak the language with which he/she is most familiar and the language expected by the social group. This is referred to as overlapping situations where individuals have the predilection to use or choose a different language or dialect.

One of the central themes of Herman’s work is the potential conflict between the choice of a language with which a speaker is comfortable and a variation that is more identifiable with a socio-cultural grouping. The speaker is almost obliged to make a choice related to conformity and class rather than the variety that would be used in the majority of situations.

Howard Giles (1973) developed the notion of accommodation in linguistic behaviour. Usually accommodation takes the form of convergence where the speaker will choose a language or dialect that seems to suit the needs of the person being spoken to. This choice might reflect or mirror the manner in which the listener speaks bear close resemblance to it. Under some conditions, however, a speaker may fail to converge or may diverge making no effort to change or adjust his speech pattern for the benefit of the other person. He might indulge in a form of speaking in which he overplays this normal speech in order to emphasise loyalty to his own group and disassociate himself from the interlocutor's group.

The most convergent behaviour would be to use the other person's language and attempt to pronounce words as carried out by native speakers. Less convergent would be to use the other person's language using a very strong accent. On a lesser scale the speaker may use his own language or dialect but slow the speed of talking in deference of the other person who might have some difficulty in understanding it. The most divergent behaviour is for the speaker not to change at all with the normal speed being maintained in the hope that the other person will comprehend the speech.

Howard Giles and Simon Herman have carried out useful and helpful work on the psychological approach on language choice. Although the work mainly pertains to the use of different languages those concepts may be applied to dialects as well. How might those approaches assist with the study of the use of dialect in Orkney?

In the overlapping situations mentioned by Herman, speakers are faced with the dilemma of what variety is most suitable in a variety of situations. In Orkney some

speakers might feel much confident and comfortable with their dialect but feel that they should use Scottish Standard English as this would be expected by the group in which they are placed at the time.

Accommodation theory appears to be relevant as it covers convergence and divergence. In the Orcadian context there might be a variety of levels of dialect available to the speakers. The choice of speech relies on the attitude of the speaker and the perceived need to change, to suit the listener, along with the level of importance attached to the interchange. Some speakers might take the view that they have no need to change for any person and this could have an adverse effect on the outcome of the speech event.

Mufwene (2001) in his conclusions on the evolution of language, argues that language is more like a bacterial species than an organism. He believes that the structural processes involved in the contacts of idiolects, dialects and languages are the same with the contact arena situated “in the mind of the speaker” (2001:207) Mufwene states that internal and external factors play a part in the evolution of language:

“They play complementary roles in determining the evolutionary trajectory of a language under different ecological conditions, including its own structural properties, those of other languages it came in contact with when this is relevant, and the ethnographic conditions of its use” (2001:207) Mufwene is relevant to this study and his evolutionary approach concurs with the ways in which dialect evolves within a rural island situation.

The social psychological concepts may be very amenable and adaptable to a variety of situations. They apply to Orkney as they appear to fit the way people view the way they speak to people outside their community. These concepts been employed to look at dialect research in island communities within the context of the thesis. The dynamics of the Orkney Islands are different to that of urban communities so it is advisable to exercise caution when using such concepts in connection with this thesis.

2.6.3 Some other relevant research

This will feature Löw-Wiebach and her studies in Pitmedden, Aberdeenshire, Watson – on being English in Scotland and White Settlers (a study of migrants to the Highlands of Scotland.)

2.6.3.1 Löw Wiebach: Research in Pitmedden, Aberdeenshire

Löw-Wiebach used both qualitative and quantative methods in her research in Pitmedden. She was focussing on the dialect of this part of Aberdeenshire (the Doric) and one of the main points of interest was to establish a possible comparison between the claimed attitudes and use of the dialect and active passive knowledge of the dialect. In the course of her research, Löw-Wiebach encountered two Orcadian informants and it is worthwhile to consider their comments:

“Interestingly, the two Orcadian informants in the sample claim that in Orcadian schools, proper English plays only a minor role. The informant (male aged 40) recalls one English teacher who “tried to tell you to pronounce your letters a wee bit better than ... but err .. quite a lot of people in the class and the parents objected.” His

mother (age 69) says in general, the teachers did not insist on the pupils speaking differently” (2004:143)

According to Löw-Wiebach, the future of Doric depends on the attitudes of the local people and, in general, their attitudes were positive. This corresponds with Melchers (1985) in her studies in Shetland. The native Pitmedden base, Scottish and elderly informants have even more pro-Scottish and pro-Doric attitudes which corresponds with the original research hypothesis.

2.6.3.2 Watson

The migration of English people into Scotland has been one of the focal points of this thesis and other research. Watson (2004) produced a fine study in which he documented the comments made by a number of people on their experiences. The reader was given a comprehensive account of what it is like being English in Scotland.

In the section on language Watson noted the problem of new migrants and their understanding of the Scottish accents along with the selection of dialect words from Shetland to the Borders.

One of the most striking effects of the English accent was the perception of many Scots that the speaker was middle class. Some of the English immigrants even wished that they did not speak in this way as it gave them this status. What emerges from Watson is that this view of the English people is an important factor in defining the origins of the migrants and is a marker of nationality and culture. In the context of

Orkney, this has some resonance as an English accent can be viewed as a sign of intellectual ability and competence. Class issues might differ from other parts of Scotland as island communities appear to pay less attention to the status of the person and more on their ability to integrate.

2.6.3.3 White Settlers

Jedrej and Nuttall (1996) looked at the metaphorical dimensions of meaning in the terms “local” and “incomer”; how those terms were used; relations between local people and migrants and how identities are shaped within a community.

The stereotype of the incomer as used by the Orcadians is featured and Stead (1990:22) in her MA dissertation describes this stereotype: “of someone running away from problems but bringing it with them, having unrealistic views of what it means to live on an Orkney Island, being on the dole, giving nothing to the island, wanting to change things, bringing in outside agencies (police, social workers etc.) to sort things out.”

Jedrej and Nuttall maintain that incomers would not perceive themselves as being a threat to traditional values and social structures but “ it is also true that incomers, paradoxically, accept the views held by locals about themselves as incomers” (1996:103)

2.7 Summary of Chapter Two

There is a comprehensive body of information on the subject of language and society. The thesis is based on the social and cultural factors which have influenced the use of

dialect in Orkney so this necessitated a selective appraisal of sources relevant and helpful to the topic under scrutiny. In this concluding section the value of the sources will be examined and some evaluation of the material will be attempted in order to assess whether or not the literature has answered some of the questions posed in the research questions.

Attitudes towards dialect feature in the work Holmes who wrote about stereotyping and the reasons why people may feel that dialect lacks prestige. It will be interesting to discover whether this applies to the situation in Orkney with a very mixed and rural population. Trudgill also looks at the ways in which people view the vernacular and mentions respect for local dialect. He suggested the need for people to adopt a more positive attitude to the use of dialect in order that local language does not disappear. Both Holmes and Trudgill provide a worthy introduction to the subject of this thesis.

Crystal and Montgomery discussed the changes that have taken place in the use of language and some of the reasons for the variations. Montgomery was keen to feature issues of status in relation to language use while Crystal spoke of the relationship between standard and non-standard language. Those writers provided some useful background to the topic although it could be argued that they looked at situations which might be less relevant to the study of dialect in an island community.

The section on sociolinguistic features covered diglossia, code-switching, language death and approaches to language choice. Those features provided an academic framework and were relevant to the study of dialect in an island community such as Orkney. There was a suggestion that the term diglossic speech situation would best

describe the process in Orkney where different varieties of SSE are used within a number of speech situations. Code-switching takes place when the local islanders feel that they should modify or change their way of speaking in a particular context. Language death was discussed as some of the points made by Crystal and Romaine apply to the possible dilution and potential disappearance of the Orkney dialect.

The approaches to language choice – sociology, social psychology and anthropology – were very pertinent and invaluable as a means of interpreting the fieldwork. The social psychological case studies from Herman and Giles outlined the possible scenarios that could be applied to use of dialect in Orkney. The anthropological approach, where the researcher lives among in the community, was highly relevant to the manner in which the fieldwork was to be carried out.

Social Network Analysis and the Attitude research work were both instructive and constructive. The research cited by Davies and Baker helped to set the thesis in context and provided a foundation for the fieldwork in Orkney. Ethnographical methods were most applicable to the focus of the research on social and cultural factors influencing the use of dialect in Orkney.

Chambers said “speech is thus a tool, perhaps a weapon, with which the higher class can maintain the gap between itself and the rest of society.” (2004:275). If this is the case then perhaps dialect is a vehicle by which people in small communities can establish their identity and reinforce the bonds that distinguish them from other people who may not share such a strong sense of culture and heritage. Maybe dialect transcends class and the use of vernacular counteracts the negative feelings of its

speakers and neutralises the prejudice and the negativity of those who believe that the use of higher registers denotes a particular status in society.

This review has covered a number of approaches and discussed sociological and sociolinguistic perspectives along with elements of social psychology and anthropology. Research carried out in Shetland and Aberdeenshire have informed the thesis and provided an understanding of the complexities of undertaking research in Have some societies gone beyond diglossia? How useful are Labovian research techniques to the study of dialect in Orkney? Can social network theory cover and assist with the understanding of dialect use in a rural island community?

Issues have been raised (Marshall 2004) in terms of the validity of models and concepts. He suggested that any models must take cognisance of the individual within a rural setting. Eckert's communities of practice, where the focus on the meaning of communication, and Marshall's amended model (2004), are relevant, robust and rigorous. Those approaches may be applied to rural island settings where features unique to a particular location and local idioms and attitudes could be missed. They have been employed in this study and were applicable to the use of dialect in Orkney. The paucity of research into the use of dialect in Orkney and the need for greater understanding of the influences of social and cultural factors affecting the way people perceive the vernacular can be addressed by the application of such models.

Chapter Three

The sociolinguistic history of Orkney: insights from folklore and from research

3.1 Introduction

The time line below provides a guide to life in Orkney over the last 5000 years:

3800 BC	Knap of Howar on the island of Papa Westray
3200 BC	Occupation at Skara Brae
2900 BC	Standing Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar erected
2200 BC	Skara Brae abandoned
700 BC	Iron Age dwellings constructed
500 BC	Broch building takes place
300 - 800AD	Pictish culture in Orkney
800 - 1468	The Viking Invasion and Norse rule
1468	Impignoration of Orkney to Scotland
1700 onwards	Crofting and farming develops
1855	Development of transport links with the Mainland of Scotland
1914 - 1918	First World War
1939 - 1945	Second World War
1960 onwards	Immigration to Orkney

This chapter will examine some of the sources from Orkney that helped to inform the thesis. Those sources will include research carried out by people from other parts of the world. Hugh Marwick has been an important starting point for scholars who are interested in the background to the dialect used in the islands .The work of two lesser

known but equally important writers – Walter Traill Dennison and John Firth – will be mentioned at the outset. They published their work prior to the appearance of Marwick's *The Orkney Norn* in 1929.

In more recent years Gregor Lamb and Margaret Flaws collected words for an Orkney Dictionary aimed at the younger generation. The dialect writing of Robert Rendall and Christina Costie and Robert Rendall will be discussed along with the use of dialect in the local media. Some recent research will introduce the ideas and perspectives from people who are not resident in Orkney.

The work of Hugh Marwick is of immense importance and the following comment is especially relevant to this study:

According to Willi Murray:

“.....Hugh Marwick had unique qualities which enabled him to comment with great insight on both the dialect and place names of his native Orkney....” (1992:iii)

Hugh Marwick's seminal work assisted with phonological explanations on aspects of dialect variation between the islands. *The Orkney Norn* is not just a dictionary of dialect words it also contains comments on the development of language in Orkney over the past 500 years. It was a valuable reference tool in any study of the use of dialect in Orkney. This will be considered in more detail later but Marwick had this to say with regard to the way in which the language changed from the Norn to Standard Scots English (SSE)

“.....throughout the seventeenth century Orcadians must have been in large measure bilingual. As the ties binding them to Norway gradually snapped, so did the memory of a common language grow dimmer until, in the eighteenth century, the ability to speak the ancient tongue was rare enough to stamp one as something of a curiosity – an “auld Norny body” – interesting but also perhaps rather uncanny.....”
(1927: xxvi)

Michael Barnes (1998) has also written about the Norn of Orkney and Shetland and some of his work is relevant to the topic discussed within this thesis.

Although this research project is based on the study of attitudes towards the use of dialect, it is important to set the work in historical context as the Norse influence is strong within the Orkney Islands – indeed the Viking legacy lives on in many ways. One of the best examples of this legacy is the preponderance of place names in Orkney that originated from the Norse settlers:

Vik (bay or inlet)	kvi (cattle enclosure)	bolstaðtr (farm)
Burwick	Boloquoy	Swanbister
Rackwick	Stenaquoy	Sellibister
Skelwick	Tuquoy	Skedgibist
Sandwick	Strangquoy	Grimbister

There are about 50,000 place names in Orkney (Wainwright 1962) associated with the language of the Scandinavian settlers. Although the population has changed and the

indigenous folk have moved away from the farms, the named of the settlements and the various features remain as part of the Viking heritage of the islands.

Orcadian writers such as C M Costie and Gregor Lamb also provided material that is relevant to the study into the use of dialect. Costie wrote stories in the local dialect while Lamb produced a number of books such as *The Orkney Wordbook* and *The Orkney Dictionary* that supplement and update the work carried out by Marwick.

3.2 Walter Traill Dennison and John Firth

Walter Traill Dennison (1826–1894) was a farmer and folklorist. He was a native of Sanday where he collected local folk tales. He published these, many in the local Orcadian dialect, in 1880 under the title *The Orcadian Sketch-Book*. Until his death in 1894, Walter Traill Dennison collected and recorded a valuable store of traditional local folklore, much of it concerning the sea and its mythical creatures such as mermaids. Through Dennison's work, many Orcadian poems and stories exist today that might otherwise have been lost. He is responsible for bringing the dialect to the knowledge of the people and was one of the earliest writers in the vernacular. Although the writing appeared as folk tales it was, nevertheless, a significant contribution to the collection of dialect words used in Orkney during the 19th century.

In *The Orcadian Sketch Book* Dennison included a glossary of dialect words which supplemented the tales and poems in his book. This provided the reader with a guide to the meaning of the words but also highlights the use of dialect in the 19th century. Dennison wrote “The author’s principal object has been to preserve the dialect of his native islands from that oblivion to which all unwritten dialects are

doomed and at the same time to present a part of our great human nature as it really existed, unsophisticated by the rules of polite society unelevated by education and unpolished by art.” (1880:vii)

John Firth (1838 - 1922) was a blacksmith who lived in the parish of Firth. He was interested in all aspects of Orcadian life and wrote notes and journals of his observations. His book *Reminiscences of an Orkney Parish* was finally published in 1920 only two years before his death. This book also included a glossary of Orkney words as Firth was keen to promote the value of the local vernacular. He wrote: “The old Orkney dialect, with its quaint and peculiar diction, destined to no immediate or early extinction and wherever Orcadians meet in all parts of the world, its rich and beautiful accent and melodious tones awakens the most tender sentiments and emotions, and recall the most hallowed associations and cherished memories.” (1974:146)

The work of Dennison and Firth constitutes a rare collection of stories and tales of the lives of the people of Orkney in past centuries. They both had vision and the foresight to collect the words and phrases of the people. They also had a passion for bringing the dialect of the islands to a wider world. Dennison was the first writer to produce work in the dialect while Firth was able to highlight the value and the identity of the Orkney tongue.

3.3 Hugh Marwick and Michael Barnes

Hugh Marwick was born on a croft on the island of Rousay on 30 November 1881. He attended the island school and eventually decided to become a teacher and went to

teacher training college in Aberdeen in 1900. After taking a degree in English in Edinburgh he taught in Lancashire before his appointment as head of the Burgh School (now Kirkwall Grammar School) in 1914. Marwick took his Doctorate about 15 years later and published his work *The Orkney Norn* in 1926. This was a lifelong ambition and provided the first collection of the language in book form. He was appointed Director of Education in 1926 and received Doctorates from the University of Aberdeen and the University of Bergen. After a short illness he passed away on 21 May 1965.

The work undertaken by Marwick will be considered along with that of Professor Michael Barnes. Now retired, Barnes has spent many years researching and studying Scandinavian languages including the Norn of Orkney and Shetland. His comments help to bring a modern perspective on Hugh Marwick and place the old language in context.

There are a number of factors to be considered when discussing the origins of the dialect and languages spoken in Orkney today. Both Marwick and Barnes looked at the use of the Norn language so it is appropriate that the discussion encompasses the thoughts of both with connections and comparisons between the two writers mentioned at the appropriate point. It is fair to say that Marwick tended to focus on the etymology and structure of the words while Barnes has a broader base looking more at implications and historical backgrounds.

The origins of the term Norn comes from the Old Norse *norroena* meaning “northern” and used to distinguish the language of Norway from other Scandinavian tongues.

According to Barnes “to some it denotes any piece of Scandinavian language material emanating from the Northern Isles, to others it means only the spoken Scandinavian of the islands and written records of such speech.”(1998:1)

There are varying opinions concerning the level of engagement between the Picts and the Scandinavian settlers. Marwick says that it was “in the main complete before the year 900AD (1929, 1992:10). Barnes agrees and suggests that there would have been contact between the islands prior to this date but no large scale migration before 800AD. It is thought that most settlers came from Western Norway.

The main impact of the Scandinavian settlement was the complete transformation of the language. Through the volume of settlers the existing languages would have been overtaken by Old Norse which developed into the Orkney Norn. Barnes contends that the Scandinavians were confronted with two or three unfamiliar languages which would have had Celtic origins. The outcome was complete dominance of the Norse tongue.

According to Marwick some Celtic words may have been borrowed although there is no proof that any words were borrowed at the time of settlement. He gives two examples pointing out that the word *krue* – small enclosure – would have had its source ultimately in the Old Irish *cro* meaning enclosure or fold. Another word *keero* for the native North Ronaldsay sheep originated from the Scottish Gaelic *ciora*; pet sheep or the Irish *caera*: sheep. Those animals are likely to have been found on the island when the Scandinavians arrived so there would have been no need to invent a new name for them.

Marwick produced a paper which was presented to the Orkney Antiquarian Society in 1929 in which he covered the Celtic place names of Orkney in some detail. This would suggest that the Norn language did not wholly subsume the tongue of the previous settlers. It does lend support to the view that there was some form of integration between the Scandinavian settlers and the Pictish people.

While it was apparent that some Celtic words were borrowed by the Scandinavians and became part of the Norn it is nevertheless true that such loans would have been relatively few in number. Marwick said "Norsemen were masters; they had no incentive to learn the native tongue and the natives of necessity must have had to learn the tongue of their conquerors." (1929: xv). He mentions the use of Norse words in modern Gaelic and cites this as an illustration of mixed languages in the Hebrides.

The Orkney Norn is likely to have been the language of Orkney for about 700 years. Although contacts with Scotland would have been in place for centuries, linguistic changes would only gathered momentum following the impignoration in 1468 when Orkney and Shetland were pledged to Scotland as part of a marriage dowry in connection with the union between James III of Scotland and Princess Margaret of Denmark.

Barnes says that the reason that Norn died was because the North Isles became more orientated towards Scotland and "there was no motivation to perpetuate a low-prestige vernacular with no official status" (1998:26). Orkney and Shetland would have been bilingual throughout the 17th Century. Due to economic and social conditions there

would have been a situation where Norn was seen as a relic of the past and Scots would have been viewed as language of the future. (Barnes 1998:27)

In his book on Orkney published as part of the County Series in 1951 Marwick wrote in a more entertaining and enlightening style in his chapter on dialect. The series of books were intended to gain insights into life in a variety of places throughout the United Kingdom. He opened the chapter by giving an account of his mistaken identity as a Welshman while teaching in England. Apparently the lilt and intonation of the Orkney accent was confused with that of Wales. In the main section of the chapter his approach was more sociological in character and he looked at the use of words in the context of farming or fishing activities. In some ways this chapter was more applicable to the thesis as it covered social and cultural aspects of dialect use.

Both Hugh Marwick and Michael Barnes have provided comprehensive information and comments on the early history of the Orkney dialect. They have highlighted the impact of the Scandinavian settlers and the legacy left in the form of place names and dialect words. Both writers mentioned the lack of agreement on the fate of the Picts but there is a consensus on the ultimate result of the invasion where the Celtic language was replaced by the Norse language developing into the Orkney Norn.

In conclusion the work carried out by Marwick and Barnes has been informative and provided a base from which to view the present use of dialect by considering the historical and social situation from which the dialect emerged. One of the main omissions is the social implications of any change along with the attitudes of the people towards the Norn. It might have been useful if Marwick had looked at the

views of the people at the time of his research from 1925 – 1929. As Barnes has pointed out there must have been a driving force behind the changes that took place following impignoration. The social and economic conditions would have encouraged the people to make the change from Norn to English. The influence of the Sinclair earldom would have played an important role in in suppressing the written use of the Norn language.

3.4 Gregor Lamb

Gregor Lamb produced two books related to the collection of dialect words. *The Orkney Wordbook* (1988) which is a fairly detailed work on the meaning and etymology of the Orkney dialect has been a reference source for people interested in the definitions of words. In collaboration with Margaret Flaws, Lamb compiled the *Orkney Dictionary* (1996) which was intended for young people with a view to introducing them to the dialect. The book has been used a source by visitors to Orkney who are impressed by its clarity and readability. It is not an academic reference work but more a simple guide to the dialect words and their counterparts in English.

In the introduction to the Dictionary Lamb says (1996: III) "we have lost a great number of words we once used" but he adds "the surprise lies in the fact that so much of it still exists" He suggests that the Orkney Norn must have exerted a strong influence as many of the dialect words still in use originate from the language of the Scandinavian settlers. Lamb indicates that the richness of the dialect offers a useful tool for communication when "English fails us." (1996:III)

While the two publications mentioned above provide a collection of dialect words, a more recent article, "Whit like the day?" (Lamb 2005), covers the structure and grammar of the Orcadian tongue. Many of the nuances and idiosyncrasies are featured and Lamb provides a number of examples where words are used in context. Looking at nouns for example he says that the word "piece" may refer to a place or a sandwich or a measure of distance. Some verbs are pronounced and spelt differently with found = "fand", kept would be "keepied" and someone who has worked hard would have "wrowt a lot". The use of gerunds is mentioned ("meetan" and "danceen") and the use of diphthongs is discussed (2005:102).

Lamb has produced other publications including *Orcadiana* in which he featured articles written on Orkney including dialect. Some of his dialect poetry was published as *Come Thee Wiz*. In an article in the *Orcadian* newspaper of 15th May 1975, entitled "*We call a spade a spade*", he indicates that there is no standard pronunciation in Orkney with the word "all" being pronounced "aa" or "aal" or "a-el" depending on the location in which the person is domiciled. Some consonants also have been affected with words such as German becoming "cherman" and jersey sounding like "chersee". Verbs and nouns may often differ with the same word pronounced differently according to the part of speech - the example being "whit a wark tae work" or "am gaan tae the fishin becis I like fishan" This article was written in 1975 but is still relevant to today. Lamb comments "Orkney dialect seems to have withstood well fifty years of broadcasting and one hundred years of education." (1975: *The Orcadian*).

Lamb has been the driving force behind the expansion of knowledge of the dialect in Orkney. The publications mentioned have given people the chance to understand some of the words, idioms, phrases and saying used in the islands. His articles and poems have provided entertainment and amusement by describing contemporary life in an individual way through the use of vernacular.

From a critical point of view there are issues to be addressed. It could be argued that much of Lamb's work is not rigorous or academically referenced and intended to provide the reader with humour rather than serious study. Perhaps the Dictionary might have benefited from the use of footnotes or more information on the derivation of the words. It would have been helpful to discover more about the etymology and the phonological basis for many of the words included in the book. Lamb mentions that he has experience of a certain area of Orkney and says that variations exist throughout the islands. It might have been advisable to have considered those differences in order to provide a more accurate picture as those variations create new words or different meanings.

The use of dialect in humorous poetry has been the source of light entertainment on radio and at dinners or concerts for many decades. Lamb has narrated the writing of R T Johnston (*Stenwick Days*; 1984) on Radio Orkney which has been popular with many people especially immigrants to the islands. In his reading Lamb adopts a voice for some of the characters which is high pitched and comical. The danger is that the way of speaking might be perceived as the typical Orkney tongue which is misleading. It is possible that the portrayal of the characters in this manner could lead to ridicule as any people whose diction may be similar could be adversely affected in

their daily life. This could lead to the devaluation of dialect and speakers using the vernacular for entertainment and humour only.

Some of the comments made by Lamb are misleading as he says that there is no such thing as Standard English or standard dialect. It is true to say that SSE and Orkney dialect are variations of English but it is somewhat inaccurate to state that standards do not exist.

There was a need to examine why people use dialect or feel that they need to change the way they speak. Lamb has been very successful in introducing the dialect to a wider public. The dialect only comes alive when it is set in some form of context. It is, however, not a linguistic peculiarity to be perceived as a source of humour and entertainment. Orcadian dialect is a living entity and a means of communication and is part of the way that people live in Orkney.

There is no doubt that Gregor Lamb made a useful contribution to the promotion of the Orkney dialect as he was a prolific writer on the subject. As he was inspired by Marwick it is not surprising that many of the words featured have their origins in the Orkney Norn. He has collected a plethora of information and written widely on the dialect. Lamb must be seen as one of the central figures in the work on dialect in Orkney. His writing needs to be carefully considered as it requires further explanation in order to consolidate the comments made on a wide variety of dialect speech situations. Lamb's work is informative and entertaining but lacks the rigour and attention to methodical research such as that carried on by Hugh Marwick and Michael Barnes in their work on the Orkney Norn. It is not possible to make valid

comparisons between Lamb and Marwick as the former appears to rely on general or assumed knowledge while the latter undertook diligent surveys to substantiate his work.

3.5 Robert McColl Millar

In the introduction to his book *Northern and Insular Scots* (2007a) Robert McColl Millar talks about the Scots dialects of Northern Scotland and how they exhibit features that have not been seen elsewhere for centuries. He contends that the recent occupations encouraged speech with local identity but in recent years with the decline of fishing and the changes in farming along with the discovery of oil, in-migrants have been encouraged to move to Orkney with many varieties of English now being spoken.

Millar speaks about the marginality of the North East of Scotland in relation to West Germanic languages and in geographic terms. The traditional industries of agriculture and fishing were also marginal in comparison with contacts with industrial production.

Millar refers to Orcadian and Shetlandic as being dialects of Scots rather than English and justifies this by stating that the Germanic dialects of Scotland are different in historical, social and cultural terms from “the other descendants of Old English. He says,

“If England and Scotland had not become united under the same monarchy and parliament in 1707, it is very likely that Scots and English would now be considered as separate languages.” (2007a:15).

Language shift is a feature of many societies and will happen as people move from place to place and Millar talks about Sasse (1992) who provided a model for the process that happens when one language dies and another takes its place. In summary speakers of traditional language may feel obliged to use the new prestige variety but elements of the native language may be carried to the new language. As time passes negative attitudes may emerge with some people making the decision not to speak the traditional form although, to express group identity some residue of the former language may remain within the new language (Millar; 2007a).

Millar notes that the language shift in Orkney where the Orkney Norn succumbed to Standard Scots English exemplifies the Sasse model. The values attached to the Scots English in terms of prestige and status led to the adoption of the language as the mode of communication although many of the dialect words remained with their roots embedded in the Norn.

According to Millar the social situation of the last speakers of the Orkney Norn would have mirrored the way in which languages in the Mediterranean area were overwhelmed by new languages (Sasse 2001 and Fishman 1991). As Orkney had a maritime background with domination of the sea and farming dissipated in small rural areas, then the Norn might have survived for a time. “if the Orkney Norn speakers had been able to maintain their cultural or religious identity as separate from the Scots incomers, their language might have been preserved for some time.” (Millar, 2007a: 127)

There is a suggestion that here was a stigma attached to the Norn as a language of the peasantry. Scots had been spoken in Orkney for a lengthy period and in nearby Caithness which Millar suggests may also explain the some of the intonation of the Orcadian speech.

It is suggested this might have been derived from the Gaelic influence (cf van Leyden, 2004). This is a matter of conjecture as there is little evidence to suggest that the Orkney people were influenced by the Gaelic speakers. There is a need for further research into the Celtic connections and how some of the Pictish influences may have survived through the use of language.

The greatest influence Norn has had upon the Scots of the Northern Isles is lexical and Millar acknowledges the work of Gunnel Melchers (1981) who has looked at the semantic evidence within the field of emotions and names for flora and fauna. Millar goes on to say “Too much can be made of the Scandinavian element in the traditional dialects of Orkney and Shetland..... possibly because, it is this feature..... which expresses the difference between the Northern Isles and the Scottish Mainland. In terms of the lexis of both dialects, much of the material is, or has been shared with the more traditional mainland varieties” (2007a:132).

Millar suggests that the dialect in Shetland has survived to a greater extent than in Orkney. He does concede that much of the evidence is anecdotal but mentions the point that Shetlanders have a more positive self- perception than Orcadians “even if there is an equivalent to *knappin* in Orcadian *chantin*.” (2007:134) “Chantin’ ” (or

“chantan”) is the term given to the use of affectation within a speech situation where the speaker uses SSE in order to create a favourable impression.

3.6 Paul Johnston

In his chapter on Insular Scots and the language variations used in Orkney and Shetland, Johnston (1997) believes that its one of the best examples of a relic speech form in Scotland:

“yet both Orcadian (insular A) and Shetlandic (insular B) are not totally conservative; they are better described as going their own way relative to Scots, adopting sometimes striking but highly localised innovations including an extensive Clockwise Vowel Shift, far –reaching diphthongisation, a constonant system recast to match the inventory of the Norn that was spoken alongside Scots and a strongly Norse-influenced vocabulary and syntax scattered among the archaic features in the linguistic system”

“.... Both groups contain a high level of diversity, and the internal divisions do not always correlate with island boundaries” (1997:448)

Johnston refers to the the internal structure in Orkney and to subdialects extending over adjacent islands with Westray, Sanday and North Ronaldsay having their own subvariety.

“The occurrence of the same innovation in several different places makes it hard to talk about foci and relic areas within insular Scots itself. It is plain, however, that the

weird varieties, the ones that go their own way the most, comes from the most tight knit communities perhaps consisting of only one social network” (1997:448)

It would be interesting, he speculates, to see if North Ronaldsay has similar types of network.

Johnston is interested in the class structure and considers the localised dialects and how those interplay within the wider world:

“This intensely insular way of life has helped the communities to preserve their Pattern 1 way of using Scots..... only a tiny minority of native SSE speakers among the upper middle class in the Orkney towns..... even university graduates have their local village dialect as the main part of their repertoire, and may not be “pure” SSE speakers in any style Localised dialect is thus used by nearly everyone to insiders, and mixed lects to outsiders, with the proportion of SSE forms increasing with greater formality and among higher-status speakers.” (1997:448)

Johnson cites Melchers in his discussion on the effects of class and the use of language:

“Class differencesmuch less important in determining the variety employed than the ingroup/outgroup distinction, a situation that one would expect in a community with such tight networks and historical isolation” (Melchers 1985:98)

3.7 Klaske van Leyden

Klaske van Leyden from the Netherlands has studied the language of Orkney and Shetland for a number of years. In 2004 she published the results of her PhD study on

the prosodic characteristics of the dialects of Orkney and Shetland. In her introduction she says that the dialects have distinct features that may be ascribed to the Norm substratum. The Orkney dialect is characterised by a distinctive lilting rise and fall intonation while the dialect of Shetland is more level intonation with a fairly low pitch.

Van Leyden wanted to check the differences between the dialects of the two island groups and also look at any attributes that may be linked to Scottish influences. She mentions the regional diversity within the islands and how there was little contact between individual islands – the children went to the local school and married within their own parish. The towns of Kirkwall and Lerwick would have been the first to experience new social and linguistic trends which eventually spread to the outlying areas. “the glottal stop seems to have arrived only recently in the rural areas.” (2004:17)

One of van Leyden’s comments could be misinterpreted and must have been based on an assertion rather than careful research. She says, with regard to social varieties, that there is no SSE-speaking middle class and virtually all native speakers employ local dialect in their everyday speech “in fact using standardised forms of English with locals – known as chanting – is much frowned upon” (2004:17). It is seen as using an affectation to enhance a conversation or increase self-image and is fabricated.

“Orcadians and Shetlanders take a pride in their Norse heritage that sets them apart from mainland Scotland, and speaking dialect is regarded as a way to emphasise the difference.” (2004:18)

Klaske van Leyden aimed to find experimental support for “impressionistic” claims that there are intonational differences between the dialect of Orkney and Shetland. She conducted experiments with native speakers and evaluated those with examples from Edinburgh and Scandinavia. Van Leyden found that Shetland dialect was linguistically closer to Nordic languages than it was to Orcadian or Mainland Scots.

“We conclude that the prosodic difference between Orkney and Shetland speech is a matter of intonation rather than temporal organisation.” (2004:100)

According to van Leyden, Shetland speech seems to have retained its Scandinavian temporal organisation while Orkney has lost this feature – Shetland dialect has therefore maintained its Norn substratum to a greater extent than Orkney. This would not be surprising as the Scottisation would have taken place much earlier in Orkney due to its close proximity to the Scottish Mainland.

As far as intonation is concerned, melodic differences between the two dialects appears to lie in the pitch rise of the accent. The Shetland rise is on the stressed syllable while the Orkney rise is post syllable. “It is puzzling that one should find Scandinavian intonation in Orkney, but not in Shetland dialect..... which appears to be the more Scandinavian of the two varieties.” (2004:100) According to van Leyden, it might be possible that Gaelic influences, via Caithness dialect, have indirectly affected the speech melody of Orcadian dialect.

The main conclusion of her thesis was that the dialects of Orkney and Shetland, although closely related,” exhibit remarkable differences both in terms of syllable

structure and intonation patterns”(2004:132) She goes on to mention the origins and causes of those differences and says that Shetland maintains more features attributable to the Norn than Orkney. The differences in intonation are more difficult to explain with Scandinavian intonation in Orkney but not in the Shetland dialect.

According to van Leyden: “One possible explanation could be that Orkney intonation has been in some way affected by the various Gaelic-influenced mainland dialects” (2004:133) Throughout her thesis van Leyden mentions differences and variations between the Orkney and Shetland dialects and the experimental approach to her research. It would appear that her informant age range was fairly narrow – in the 30 to 50 age group – and that she may not have carried out interviews with a substantial number of people.

3.8 Dave Gray, Robbie Fraser and Sigurd Towrie

This section will consider the use of dialect within the media in Orkney looking at the newspaper coverage and the amount of dialect content; the use of dialect on BBC Radio Orkney; how the local expressions may be featured on television and the national media; and information on dialect on the world-wide-web.

There is one local newspaper in Orkney: *The Orcadian*. This is a weekly paper issued on Thursdays and run by a local company with a number of local reporters. The editor is Sigurd Towrie is a local person with a keen interest in the heritage and culture of Orkney. News items are largely covered in SSE and dialect used when quotes are verbatim. Dialect tends to be used as a means of entertainment as will be discussed in

the next chapter. This might be connected to prestige values where dialect is almost seen as an art form rather than a vehicle for serious reportage.

In *The Orcadian* a weekly cartoon entitled “The Giddy Limit” portrays the humorous exploits of a family in Orkney at the present time. Dialect is used in this strip and the social comment underpinning the subject matter is very apparent as the family is made up of a returning Orcadian, his English wife who is well disposed to Orkney but is permanently confused by it, and their small son who is gradually influenced by the Orkney dialect and way of life as exemplified by the neighbouring elderly farmer Davo.

Letters to the editor may be written in dialect with a regular correspondent being Alan Taylor from Kirkwall. In those letters, dialect tends to be used to provoke thought on a particular issue or highlight some amusing incident in the news. One of the notable points in connection with the letters is that the spelling is “phonetic” and there is no standard.

The local radio station BBC Radio Orkney started broadcasting in May 1977. The first producer was Howie Firth who had roots in Orkney but spoke with an English accent as he spent his early years in London. His assistant Liz Davies was an English person so the use of dialect on the news programmes in the early years was confined to items where interviews took place with local people. The introduction of the request programmes with guest presenters brought Orcadians to the fore. An evening programme *Oot and Aboot* where Angus Findlater and Ken Ross travelled to a number of locations in Orkney led to more local voices on the station.

Over the past few years, two dialect speakers (Dave Gray and Robbie Fraser) have joined the full time staff and the former senior producer John Fergusson has encouraged the use of dialect by offering programmes such as *Whassigo* where two panels are asked to guess the meaning of a selection of Orkney words. The words are based on the work of Lamb and Marwick and are carefully chosen so that the words may be unfamiliar or not used in everyday language. Dave Gray has now taken over the senior role at Radio Orkney so the direction and use of dialect is likely to be encouraged at the station.

The use of dialect on Radio Orkney was featured as a question on the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) on attitudes (evaluated in chapters 6 and 7). Comments have been made on the subject of the use of dialect while reading the news. It is often considered too flippant or dismissive and irreverent. Those views could be related to the prestige value of dialect and whether its use on serious news might be seen as somewhat improper and lacking the impact of SSE. Even though many listeners would be Orcadians their perspectives on the vernacular in broadcasting may be conservative and somewhat parochial in character.

One of the more recent outlets for the promotion of dialect is the use of the internet. The *Orkneyjar* web site is worthy of mention. The web master, Sigurd Towrie, (who has been mentioned as editor of the *Orcadian*) has included examples of dialect with sentences to illustrate the use of the particular word. The site is constructed in a format that is easy to read but informative. Apart from *Orkneyjar* website there are mentions of the dialect on a variety of other sites although those tend to feature a particular aspect of the variations or comments on the use of dialect.

Dialect is often used as entertainment in the form of speeches at weddings, items in variety concerts, during arts festivals, at local pantomimes or in talks given to clubs and societies. Once again issues of prestige and values need to be raised in that the use of dialect in a number of those cases is intended to provide humour or entertainment. Credibility of the vernacular is superseded by hilarity. Dialect is used as the catalyst of drollery rather than as a means of serious communication.

3.9 Robert Rendall

Robert Rendall was born in Edinburgh and moved to Orkney as a child. The family had strong connections with the island of Westray. He had many interests apart from his involvement with the family draper business he was a keen painter, had an interest in shells, was a theologian supporting the Plymouth Brethren, and, for a time, he was crofter at Northbank on the outskirts of Kirkwall. For the purposes of this thesis however, it was his writing and poetry that is important. His poems and writing have contributed to the corpus of dialect writing and provided scholars with examples of the subtlety and the power of the vernacular. He began to study dialect and its literary uses but never completed his essay on the subjects. It is only some notes made in 1947 that provide a reference for this work (Dickson, 1990).

Rendall did not approve of the way that Scots had been made in to a literary shibboleth but acknowledged the way in which people like Burns had been able to create masterpieces from the sources available to them. He spoke about the situation in Orkney where both English and Scots were “the language of invading cultures” It was pointless to “turn the clock backdue to the dominance of English and the apparent relegation of Scots to be a language variant.” (1990:119)

Rendall contended that such variants might be due to fragment of earlier speech. He felt that old language often persists and that there are remnants of the language that "refuse to be jettisoned" and "when a local dialect is rich in such survivals there is a field for dialect poetry." (1990:120)

Rendall talked about old vowel inflections using examples such as quarry being pronounced as wharry as the "q" sound was not used in Old Norse. He took the view that Orkney people did not despise the Scots language although they had little motivation to consider the Scottish interests due to oppression of Scottish earls. One telling quote is "while quietly tenacious of their old Norse heritage they are too well aware of cultural values of English literary traditions, and of Scots, to despise either, and gladly strike fresh roots into the rich soil of both" (1990:121). Rendall was keen to point out the value of dialect with the community and it is difficult to be critical of his comments. He said "Dialect, then is local in its genius. It is a manuscript of local history as language is of national history and preserves the peculiarities of local development. For this reason interest in local dialect has always been a mark of local piety." (1990:121-122)

Poems written in dialect are effective and they describe Rendall's view of the contemporary world. They should reflect local life and be understood by readers as articulating life in the locality. This is exemplified in the words of two of his dialect poems: "Salt in the Bluid", and ii) "Cragman's widow".

In the first poem a former fisherman is listening to the storm raging outside and imagining that he is back at sea again:

When lood swaps gouster at the door

An the nort wind tirls the sneck

Full canvas on we drive afore

As whaalbacks sweep the deck

(Stanza 3 in Dickson (1990:190))

In “Cragman’s widow” the lines tell of an old woman whose husband has lost his life over a cliff while in the process of “swappin mallimaks” or catching fulmars by means of a net on a long pole:

Its six years by cam Lammas

Sin he gaed afore the face

An nane bit an auld dune wife

Was left to work the place

Yet the sun shines doon on a thing

The links are bonnie and green

An the sea keeps ebbin and flowan

As though it had never been

Dickson (1990:189)

3.10 Christina M Costie

Christina Costie spent most of her working life at a law office in Kirkwall. Despite ill health which plagued her for many years, she maintained a strong interest in the dialect of Orkney. In the foreword to *The Collected Orkney Dialect Tales*, Hugh

Marwick was generous with his praise for her work and said “Without any doubt it contains the finest examples of authentic and convincing dialect that have appeared since the work of Walter T Dennison and she also possesses the rare gift of telling a story as well” (1995:5). This was written in connection with a previous collection of stories entitled *Benje’s Boddle*.

The tales and stories are not written in any standard dialect as this would “ have been anathema to the writer herself” (1995:5) as she observed the variations in the local speech used in different islands and parishes. According to the writer of the foreword to the collected tales, considerable attention was paid to reprint the tales as Costie wrote them and “to defer to her as the ultimate authority on the dialect of Orkney in the twentieth century, as she undoubtedly was.” (1995:6)

In a preface to an earlier volume of stories Costie mentioned the motivations behind her writing and gave a rare insight into her thoughts on the use of dialect. She had clearly been influenced by the writing of Hugh Marwick with reference to the Orkney Norn where he expressed his hope that his book would stir interest in the Orkney terms that “ are so swiftly and irrevocably passing out of use,” (1929: iii). Costie commented “ A like concern for the old language has prompted this contribution, particularly as, since those words were written, the dialect has receded even further from us.” She continued by indicating her vision by saying, “Readers will not misunderstand, therefore, my purpose in using as far as possible the succinct words and rich idiom of our islands, thus attempting, however inadequately, to retain their use by the people whose heritage they are.” (1995:7)

The tales have intriguing titles which, in some cases, are self explanatory. Examples are: “Jeems William’s Christmas Trip”, “The Thwarted Ferrylouper”, “A Hunder Years Efter This”, “The Ill- Naturd Lass” and “Bora, the Coo fae the Sea.” In A Hunder Years Efter This, an Orcadian man is considering emigration to Australia and this is leading to some acerbic comments from his neighbours:

“Whit Black Sight’s makkan Wullie o’Braehowie strick oot for Australia at his time of life? He wis deuan ower weel whar he is.” After some discussion as the possible cause being the restlessness of the women, a more philosophical approach is offered: “Bit whit’s the odds boys..... hid’ll be a’ the sam’ a hunder years efter this” (Costie 1995:159)

In addition to the *Orkney Tales*, Costie published booklets of poems in dialect. Some of those appear to be intended to amuse and entertain the reader with descriptions of events in the community or the human condition. Other poems while written in the vernacular carry a message or have a meaning within them. The names of the poems might give the flavour of the richness of the dialect and the intended image thus created: “Wir Waddin Claes”, “De Fern Servant”, “Elementary Psychology” and “De Precentor”. In another poem entitled “Speech”, the attitude of educators in Orkney towards dialect is highlighted as the children were strongly discouraged from speaking their local tongue in the classroom. The words of the poem resonate with a number of Orcadians who attended school in Orkney from 1940 to 1970 as it portrays the feelings of a young boy who wanted to use dialect words in preference to SSE. He was chastised by the teacher who could not understand his use of the vernacular.

At the end of the poem he apparently has considered the situation and feels that he would be better to go back to Norway from where his Viking ancestors came:

Don't say "nu" say "now"
And don't say "ku" say "cow"
And the bairns aal shouted and roared wae laughter
When I said "efer" instead o "after"
She gaed me the klipe cis i said "liv"
Instead o the palm o me hand
An sheu haaled i me gansey and gaed me a rive
When I couldna understand
"Your English is terrible boy" she roared
"I just can't comprehend it"
Bit I wisna spaeken English
Though the peur sowl didna ken it
So am thowt and thowt aboot it aa
And aal hae the best o the bargain
Aal tak me claes and me money box
And cheust ging hjem til Bergen!
(Costie. 1974:13)

This poem has a resonance with the words of John Shearer in 1952 – as discussed in Chapter 1. Although written as a humorous verse the message and meaning behind the words carry with them the resistance to prescriptive methods of educating young

people out of the way they speak. (Further information on the life and work of Christina Costie may be found in Ljosland (2011))

Both Christina Costie and Robert Rendall used dialect to describe life in Orkney through the medium of vernacular speech. Their choice of words and narrative style ves the subjects added depth and meaning. Contextually the syntax structure exemplifies the particular event and the reader is able to formulate an image of the situation through the use of dialect words and idioms. The poems and prose are written in way that does not linguistically challenge non-dialect speakers. Through the writing the emotion and the physical embodiment of life in Orkney are conveyed in a most effective way and some concepts are treated in a sensitive but understanding manner.

The next section will look at two recent works connected with the language and dialect of Orkney. The writers or authors are from outside the county so provide new perspectives on the subject.

Michael Lange undertook a PhD on the topic “The discursive construction and negotiation of cultural identity in the Orkney Islands” (2006) while Graeme Davis has published a book on the early English settlement of Orkney and Shetland.

3.11 Graeme Davis

In a recently published book *The Early English Settlement of Orkney and Shetland* (2007), Davis says that there were Anglo Saxon settlements in Orkney and Shetland from 400 AD. He thinks that they were a minority group who were “ultimately

subsumed into the Norwegian population.” Historians may have mentioned this in the past but any theories have been largely ignored and dismissed.

Any comments by Davis have been based on those contained in an interview with the *Orcadian* newspaper conducted by Sigurd Towrie and published on 11th October 2007 and all references are taken from this newspaper article.

Davis told the *Orcadian* “References are scant.... I could not have written a book on the basis of written references but there are some good ones. The written records are enough to establish a hypothesis but no more than this.....”

Davis’ theories are based on linguistics and he contends that the structures of Orkney and Shetland Norn contains “echoes of Anglo-Saxon.” This is related to the Germanic origins of both languages and he says that this may explain the words in the Norn as “Germanic people in Orkney and Shetland from 400 AD and the language developed independently in the islands.”

According to Davis there is no conflict with archaeological and historical records and he is only adding to the cultural mix and “Orkney and Shetland Norn is a home-grown Orkney and Shetland product.” The archaeological traces would be small and he thinks that, when the Vikings arrived, the English merged with them and some form of language mixing took place which means “that Norn reflects those English roots along with the Viking language roots.” Orcadians can therefore be descended from the earliest inhabitants on the British Isles and “among the already rich ethnic heritage can now be counted a few early English genes.”

The theories put forward by Davis are linguistically based and he suggests that the English or Anglo-Saxons inhabited Orkney about a century after the start of the Pictish period. His assumptions also infer that the Norn was influenced by the Anglo-Saxons and, when the Scandinavians arrived, the English people were assimilated into the community. From a historic viewpoint some of those ideas are very presumptive and have no base on any form of historical, archaeological or scientific evidence. He does not appear to consider the relationship between the Picts and the early English settlers. If the Pictish people spoke a form of Celtic then why was their language not infiltrated by English from 400 AD?

3.12 Michael Lange

Michael Lange's thesis is entitled "The discursive construction and negotiation of cultural identity in the Orkney Islands." (2006) He came to Orkney from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and spent a number of months undertaking interviews with a wide selection of people from different age and occupational groupings. His thesis was primarily concerned with perceptions of identity through different perspectives; social interaction, feelings of importance, accent and dialect and heritage.

Lange devoted a chapter to accent and dialect and his fieldwork reveals some interesting points in connection with the perception of identity and culture through the way people speak and interact with each other. He acknowledged the impact of the Orkney Norn on the local speech of the present day (2006:110) and says that the impact of the Scandinavian tongue is less than 100 years ago but "many differences

between Orcadian dialect and the Queens English remain whatever those origins, those differences conspire to make Orcadian seem like a separate language.”

Some other factors covered included the apparent divide between local culture and incomer culture; the ridicule of dialect spoken in the islands; the influence of tourism and the ways in which Orkney tourist guides often change their speech for visitors while informing them of the features of the vernacular. Lange mentions the salvaging of dialect and how it is often viewed as an archaic entity “a curiosity (sic) to be preserved and displayed in a museum” (2006:115)

Attempts to teach dialect in schools, (2006:126) were adversely affected by the wave of immigration in the 1970s and 1980s. This only highlighted the differences in the classroom where immigrant children experienced some difficulty in writing poems or stories in dialect. Among the influences mentioned in connection with changes in the speech of native Orcadians, television and other media along with the influx of incomers were cited as the prime drivers of change. Lange says “aspects of modernity are often blamed but the Orcadian accent is seen as a fundamental part of identification” (2006:134).

Older people are more likely to suggest that drastic measures be taken to preserve or save the dialect – “the last vestiges of the dying dialect.” (2006:138) This age group is also likely to blame technological advances or incomers for the threat to their local way of speaking. Lange warns against the danger of reaching conclusions based on assumptions, however, and says that “it is too simplistic to put the issue down to generational difference.” (2006:138)

Lange's conclusion on accent and dialect consolidates the relationship between dialect and culture. He sees accent and dialect as markers of change and difference. In his words:

“Orkadian accent becomes easy shorthand for Orcadian culture and identity and that Orcadian identity is defined by accent and dialect.” (2006:146) The multiplicity of different accents in Orkney, along with the various attitudes towards the accents, affects the way in which people see themselves in individual terms and within group membership. In the respect of the semantics employed in the above quote, it must be noted that there are differences in definition between accent and dialect. It might have been helpful to mention that a number of dialect variations are found in Orkney.

Although the focus of Michael Lange's thesis was on the construction of identity, his work on this role played by accent and dialect is useful and has informed the thesis. Some of his comments have brought another dimension to the subject and he has interviewed a number of people throughout the islands. The importance of dialect and how the use of vernacular words affects the perception of identity is highlighted. The influences of the media and migration are mentioned and the effects on cultural identity appear to be significant in relation to those external influences.

In his overall conclusion Lange points out that the Orcadian identity cannot be based on ethnic, racial, political or linguistic factors as a whole and yet he thinks that such theoretical factors have been helpful in understanding Orcadianness (2006:258). This is somewhat confusing and leaves a number of options open for discussion such as what is identity or how can one define Orcadianness anyway?

Towards the final section of the concluding chapter, Lange says that “ Orcadians make claims of distinct identity – mostly local – but viewed as ethnic, national, class and linguistic.” (2006:262). This would appear to be contrary to the statement cited above in connection with the Orcadianness. Lange’s concluding statement that “ much of the identity of Orkney is built around being different from Scotland ... but ironically enough being Orcadian is still one of the range of possible ways to be Scottish.” (2006:262) would suggest that processes of identification on Orkney are complex and shifting.

3.13 Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter has featured a number of sources that have contributed, in different ways, to the subject of this thesis. The breadth of material and the variance of dates of publication have provided a composite and comprehensive picture of the interest in the dialect and language of the Orkney Islands.

Hugh Marwick and Michael Barnes offered helpful insights into the Orkney Norn. In his book *Orkney Norn*, Marwick included about 3000 words with meanings along with some background to the language of the Scandinavians. Barnes looked at the impact of the Norn and some of the reasons why it disappeared as the main language of the islands. From a modern perspective, Gregor Lamb has written about the dialect in populist terms and published a range of work from the *Orkney Wordbook* to the guide to grammar entitled *Whit Like the Day?*

The publications by Marwick, Barnes and Lamb have been very informative with the proviso that the texts by Lamb are less academically orientated. Their comments and

examples of Norn and dialect have highlighted the features of the language and the variations that exist throughout the islands. In all cases however, attitudes towards the use of dialect and how it might be employed in a variety of circumstances have not been covered so this thesis should help to redress the balance.

The research carried out by Michael Lange and Klaske van Leyden considered aspects of dialect from two contrasting perspectives. While Lange examined accent and dialect as part of the construction of identity, van Leyden concentrated on the prosodic approach and was concerned with the more linguistic features of intonation and pitch. Both those writers, who used their research for doctoral theses, offered interesting perspectives with some notable conclusions. Whether or not the people of Orkney may have been influenced by Gaelic or that they feel some form of Scottish identity is a matter of conjecture.

Both Robert McColl Millar and Graeme Davis have covered language and dialect in recent publications although their subject matter has displayed very contrasting avenues of thought. Millar wrote on the language of the North East of Scotland and made some interesting points on the way people speak. Davis seemed to have a different agenda suggesting that the English or Anglo - Saxons may have lived in Orkney from about 400 AD. Johnston was helpful contextually in focusing on aspects of localised dialect use and relating the Orcadian dialect to other Scots tongues while acknowledging the individuality of the island cultures.

It was important to include Robert Rendall and Christina M Costie in this chapter as their work was invaluable as a source of written dialect in various forms. This

influenced the thesis from an early stage and was inspirational as their poetry and prose along with their comments gave the use of dialect some meaning and displayed the literary value of the Orcadian tongue.

The Orkney dialect does not have a standard orthography and the most effective way of representing the speech of the informants was through the use of Orkney words written in the local lexis with spellings based of the *Orkney Dictionary* (1992) and *Orkney Wordbook* (1988)

In this study it was necessary to give the nearest approximant to an orthographic standard.

This was the case with the poetry of Rendall and Costie as they had no recognised or given standard, but were guided by the lexis of poems in the Scots tongue and words from the collection of Orkney Norn from Marwick.

In conclusion, this chapter has examined a variety of sources from the work of Marwick in 1929 to more recent research by Lange and others. A number of ideas have been mentioned by Lange in connection with identity and culture. The media has also been covered as part of the ongoing expression of the dialect within the community. Some of the writers have experience of living in the county while others may only have visited Orkney. The views expressed have always been thought provoking and stimulating and have helped shape some points in connection with this thesis.

It is clear that that the social and cultural factors which influence the use of dialect in Orkney need to be evaluated properly and it is hoped that this thesis will fulfil that mission.

Chapter Four

Research methodology, research design and methods

4.1 Introduction

As the study was based on social and cultural aspects related to the use of dialect, it was important that a sufficient number of informants be recorded. This has provided a pool of material from which to undertake analysis and also allow comparisons and variations to be monitored and checked.

The generational studies focus on the variations in the use of dialect between people of different age groups. This provided the opportunity to examine perceptions of shift in dialect attitudes and use within particular families and also highlighted differences within a community. In order to provide a broad picture, people from different social and occupational groups were interviewed in order to ascertain the influence of living and working in a variety of situations.

4.1.1 Quantitative approaches

As the name suggests quantitative research is concerned with the collection of data in a form that facilitates numeric analysis. The data gathered is analysed in terms of numbers and would be represented in tables and often interpreted using statistical techniques. According to Best and Khan “Quantitative research is based more directly on its original plans and its results are more readily analysed and interpreted.” (1989: 88-90). Burns (2000) has emphasised the strengths of quantitative methods in terms of precision, reliability and control but has also outlined the limitations in that such methods fail to take into consideration the ability of people to interpret their

experiences and construct their own meanings. In this thesis the use of quantitative data supplemented the qualitative material and provided a comprehensive analysis of attitudes of informants on the use of dialect.

4.1.2 Qualitative and ethnographic approaches

Qualitative methods are used to explore relationships, causes, effects and processes through non-numeric techniques and data is analysed in more descriptive or narrative styles than the collection of statistical data. According to Ely et al (1998), qualitative implies a direct concern with experience as it is “lived” or “felt” or and it has the aim of understanding experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it.

Martin Hammersley (1994) maintains that the ethnographic approach is similar to that used in everyday life and defines it as “real world data.” Such research has been criticized for lack of precision, for being too subjective and the validity of the sample size has also been mentioned. Those criticisms have been addressed by saying that precision is not crucial and that scientific research is not always objective and more qualitative information may be gathered from a small sample. In this work on the use of dialect in Orkney it seemed that this was an appropriate methodology.

In ethnographic studies information is gathered from a range of sources but observations and relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones. The focus of research may be a single setting or small group – Orkney is a small community and this approach seemed to be most appropriate way to undertake the research.

Some ethnographers, from Bronislaw Malinowski (1884 – 1942) onwards, believe that it is necessary to learn the culture of the group and experience the way of life before valid explanations of their behaviour can be explained. Hammersley contends that ethnographers must try to be both the outsider and the insider – staying on the margins of the group both socially and intellectually. Davies (2008) spoke about the need to be mindful of personal perspectives when researchers are engaged in work within their own society. It is imperative to de-familiarise with the topic and be aware of the context in which the interviews are set. When one belongs to a community, such as Orkney, it is especially important to develop a somewhat detached approach. This was a participant observer approach in that the researcher could be part of the community and able to understand the nuances and the plethora of information without influencing or directing the responses from the informants. One has the experience of the culture and is able to have an understanding of the complexities of living in the community. This must not conflict with any responses to questions or influence the manner in which the information is elicited during the interview.

In their book *Dialectology* (2002), Chambers and Trudgill discussed the importance of producing speech that is representative of the way that people normally speak. They say that recording speech will influence the way that people respond. Labov (1966) acknowledged this observer's paradox and suggested ways of overcoming the problem – by introducing questions designed to elicit an emotional approach (what is the most frightening situation you have ever experienced?). A similar technique was used in this research with the questions framed in a way that was more informal.

Davies (2008) believes that ethnographic research should add value to personal experiences and there needs to be a continual interplay between theory and real situations. Interviewers and informants often have shared history and, as Abu-Lughad (1991) points out, some people may also have multiple cultural identities. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) contend that both parties in an interview process are “necessarily and unavoidably active” while interviews often focus on an given area of interest (Miller and Glassner, 1997)

According to Geertz (1973) ethnography is by definition “thick” description as it goes beyond the action of the actual speech or communication. “Thin” description would describe the speech event and action of using dialect words. Thick description moves on beyond the event and looks at meanings behind actions, the symbolic importance within society or between communicators.

Brekhus et al (2005) state that some social and cultural phenomena, in some studies, warrant thin description and others require thick description: “ Our point will be that the apparent richness, thickness or thinness of qualitative enquiry is not simply a matter of good research habits but also has bearings in pre-investigative empirical purviews, developing analytical aims and available data”. (2005: 12)

Brekhus et al (2005) concluded in their paper: “Although thick description is typically applauded in juxtaposition to thin description, this is a disembodied appreciation (...) simply put, some qualitative studies are thin on certain fronts because, for good pre-investigative, analytic and empirical reasons, they need to be. Some qualitative studies are thick where others are rightfully thin. Acknowledging such differences broadens the scope of what is laudable in the enterprise” (2005:24)

In the research on social and cultural factors affecting the Orkney dialect there is both a need for thin description of the speech situation in order to clarify what language and lexis are employed, and also thick description to explain to a wider audience the meanings and the symbolic ramifications of the use of dialect within society – at the micro-level of small communities and at the macro-level.

4.1.3 Rationale for combining quantitative and qualitative approaches

At the planning stages of the thesis, the methodology to be employed was to include verbal descriptions and qualitative explanations collected through interviews. A questionnaire would provide the starting point for each interview and the ensuing discussion should elicit further details to provide a more in-depth picture. The initial sample size of 50 - 60 subjects was to be chosen from about 10 different locations throughout Orkney. This was a purposive sample aimed at covering as wide an area as was practical given the constraints of time and distance. In order to understand familial differences three generations from a family would be interviewed. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used in order to capture the thought, opinions and perspectives of a wide range of people in different parts of the county.

As Caroline Macafee (1994) has pointed out, qualitative studies are increasingly popular in social research both to assist with narrowly focused quantitative work and also as the main body of the work. The value and essence of qualitative work is “to listen to what people have to say about a policy, situation or process that directly affects them and to distill their comments into a manageable summary of opinion on that question” (1994:3)

In this study both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed in order to gain insights into the perceptions of the social and cultural factors which have influenced the use of dialect in Orkney. Löw-Wiebach (2004) used both methods in her research in Pirtmedden. Qualitative open-question interviews were used as the first part of the questionnaire with closed questions for the subsequent parts which were analysed quantitatively. Best and Khan argue that both methods are equally valuable: “Qualitative research is more open and responsive to its subject. Both types of research are valid and useful. They are not mutually exclusive. It is possible for a single investigation to involve both methods” (1989:89-90)

In the research presented in this thesis, an ethnographic approach provided a more illuminating study with valuable insights that might be missed by pure statistical analyses. Quantitative information covered salient points and offered a means of summarising the information from the initial questionnaire.

4.2 Research design: the survey of language use and attitudes

4.2.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed to elicit a comprehensive amount of information on the attitudes of the informants on the use of dialect. A number of open questions were asked as this was a survey on perceptions and nuances. The order of the questions was as follows: six questions providing personal information such as age group, place of birth and occupation, three questions seeking responses on use of dialect in daily life and the frequency of code-switching. This was followed by a question on the use of dialect when speaking to people from different social and occupational groups (with a selection of 17 categories). The disadvantages of using dialect and the use of dialect at

formal meeting was then featured, after which three questions focused on the use of the vernacular on local and national media. The next question asked participants to choose between four choices with regard to the greatest influences on dialect. Recognition of the varieties from different island and parishes was then covered. The questionnaire concluded with a penultimate question on the advantage of using SSE over dialect and the final question in which informants had to say what language meant to them.

Throughout the questionnaire four of five options were offered such as “very frequently”, “fairly frequently”, “not very frequently”, “not at all”. The informants were asked to make the most accurate and appropriate choice. Reliability and validity will be further discussed in Chapter 9. The variety and types of questions generated rich and useful comments and the results are discussed fully in Chapter 7 and 8. It is true to say that the questionnaire would have benefited from a different order of questioning bringing the subject of greatest influences on the dialect closer to the start of the interview.

4.2.2 Research sites

The research sites were selected to provide a wide geographical spread of islands and parishes in Orkney. On the periphery were the North Isles of Westray, Sanday and North Ronaldsay. The island of Shapinsay being one of the closest to the Mainland of Orkney, providing a contrast to the outer North Isles. The two towns – Kirkwall and Stromness - were the most urbanised so it was important to include residents from both places. Parishes were split into the West Mainland (Harray, Sandwick, Stenness,

Evie, Rendall, Orphir, Birsay) and East Mainland (Tankerness, Holm and South Ronaldsay). Two informants were also resident on Hoy – one of the South Isles.

Those sites covered 17 different locations and provided the researcher with a diverse demographic sample which could form the basis of further research (see Chapter 9).

4.2.3 Survey participants

The informants were chosen through contacts in each area or district. This was a purposive sample based on reaching a wide selection of the populace. Some researchers use random sampling choosing the respondents through the electoral roll or phone directory. Being a local person made the task of being accepted as a researcher less difficult, but it was necessary to guard against bias as the researcher was known to a number of people interviewed.

The methodology was primarily based on an ethnographic approach with 60 interviews undertaken to provide qualitative information. To supplement the material gathered by recorded interviews, a questionnaire was designed and 100 people were sampled from 17 locations in Orkney. Although this was intended as a means of gathering quantitative material, the data collected – along with comments from informants – provided a substantial and important part of the thesis.

Contacts in different locations were asked to suggest a number of people within the community in terms of age and place of birth. Samples chosen by means of viewing the electoral roll or random sample would have led to skewed information due to the low density of the population.

4.3 Research design: the semi-structured interviews

Semi – structured interviews have been widely used in qualitative research across social sciences. In anthropology, Edgerton (1993) used such techniques and in sociology Cockburn (1991) found interviews to be helpful. Those types of interviews may come close to conversation and there is likely to be a shared history of the topic. A schedule must be arranged and a set of questions compiled. The responses may be open ended and not restricted to the “preconceived notions of the ethnographer” (Davies 2008:106).

In the course of research for this thesis, semi-structured interviews took place with arrangements made for a time and location – usually in the home of the informant. Macafee (1994) talked about the benefits of meeting people within a social context where a comfortable and friendly atmosphere existed. She believed that without this ambience there would have been no recording styles casual enough to be recorded as local dialect. This was the case in Orkney where informants were able to respond to cues and questions in the relaxed surroundings of their own homes.

The fieldwork was carried out in Orkney from July 2004 until November 2006. Recorded interviews took place in 13 different locations throughout the islands and parishes. In each of 10 locations family members from 3 generations were featured. Those interviews were conducted in: Sanday, Kirkwall, Harray, South Ronaldsay, Westray, Stromness, Sandwick, Holm, Shapinsay and Tankerness. Individual interviews also took place in those locations along with people from North Ronaldsay. Extended interviews were undertaken with informants from Kirkwall, Stromness, Westray, Holm, Stenness and Birsay.

Interviews varied in duration due to the willingness of the person to reveal personal information along with the ways in which different individuals could articulate their ideas. A total of 9 interviews were classed as “extended” interviews due to the amount of material volunteered and the depth of interest in the subject.

During the recorded interviews, informants offered further information on different cultural experiences on such topics as island schools or work situations. On the subject of social activities, people indicated that some of the ways in which they interacted with others relied on subtle or marked changes in the way they used dialect.

The total number of interviews carried out was 60 and the gender breakdown was 25 males and 35 females. The imbalance between those figures is due to the way in which the family interviews were constituted. The availability of female members of the family was greater than that of males due to occupational reasons. Surviving grandparents tended to be female and many of them resided with their daughters. Most of the interviews were transcribed but seven interviews were not recorded and not documented in this thesis and part of the overall data corpus. Those were pilot interviews conducted in Kirkwall, Birsay, Westray and Sanday.

The total of 60 informants is made up of:

Family interviews	30	Extended interviews	9
Individual interviews	14	Pilot interviews	7

The informants were chosen from a wide cross section of the community. This was not a random selection but a purposive sample in that contacts were established in many areas through involvement with community groups and societies. Those

contacts were then able to suggest possible candidates for interview. As Orkney is a small island community the researcher was known to some of the informants. This did not appear to influence the outcome and may have enhanced interviews as the individuals felt more comfortable with a person who was familiar to them.

Examples of the subjects covered - divided into five sections:

The early years

Birthplace of self and parents

Use of dialect at home

Other factors influencing way of speaking as a young child

Education

Schools attended at junior and senior level

Frequency of dialect use in the classroom and any restrictions

Attendance at university or college

Occupation

Current employment situation

The use of dialect in the workplace

Attitudes towards the use of dialect in the workplace

Social activities

Use of dialect at home and in social situations

When does code-switching occur?

Any times when dialect is not spoken

Interactions with non-dialect speakers

Attitudes

Any times when dialect is not appropriate

Restrictions on the use of dialect

Value of the Orkney dialect in cultural and heritage terms

The cues for questions were voiced in dialect in order to establish trust and encourage informants to engage with the interviewer in a mutually concordant speech situation.

Informants were asked to discuss their use of dialect throughout their life and prompted only to adhere to time constraints or to develop points from comments made at different stages in the interview process.

4.3.1 Interviews with family members

As mentioned a total of 30 informants were interviewed – three different members from each of 10 locations. All participants were individually interviewed and the format was a semi-structured interview covering the subjects as described above.

The duration of those interviews was between 20 – 30 minutes.

Table 4.3 The Family Members

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 and over	TOTALS
Kirkwall	1		1*	1	3
Stromness		1	1*	1*	3
Sanday	1	1		1*	3
Westray	1	1		1	3
Shapinsay	1	1		1*	3
Harray		1*	1	1	3
Sandwick	1*		1*	1*	3
Holm	1	1*		1*	3
Tankerness	1		1	1	3
South Ronaldsay	1		1	1	3
	8	6	6	10	30

4.3.2 Individual interviews

Those interviews followed the same format as the family interviews but the participants were not linked to any of the families discussed in 4.3.1

Table 4.4 Individual interviews

	16-24	25 – 44	45 - 64	65 and over	TOTALS
Kirkwall	1	1*			2
Sanday		1	1	2 (1*)	4
Westray		3		1	4
Shapinsay				1	1
North Ronaldsay				3	3
	1	5	1	7	14

4.3.3 Extended interviews

Extended interviews with individuals were semi-structured but allowing the participants to develop any points which they wished to discuss. The duration of the extended interviews was between 30 – 55 minutes.

Table 4.5 Extended interviews

	16 – 24	25 – 44	45 – 64	65 and over	TOTAL
Kirkwall		1*	1*	1*	3
Stromness		1			1
Westray	1			1	2
Holm			1*		1
Stenness	1*				1
Birsay		1*			1
	2	3	2	2	9

A total of 19 participants/informants took part in the survey and in one interview. Those participants are denoted with an asterisk (*) in tables above. There were no group interviews so all informants were interviewed individually in their own homes. It is important to clarify that a total of 53 people were interviewed and recorded and that no family members were involved with the extended interviews or the individual interviews. Information of the pilot interviews is included in Table 4.6 below:

Table 4.6 The Pilot Interviews

	16 – 24	25 – 44	45 – 64	65 and over	TOTAL
Kirkwall	1		1	1	3
Westray				1	1
Birsay		1			1
Sanday		1	1		2
Total					7

4.4 Research ethics

4.4.1 Consent

Informants were contacted by telephone prior to interviews and agreed to participate in the research. They fully complied with the recording of interviews and signed consent forms before any interviews commenced, Informants were also aware that they could terminate any interviews at any time. No coercion was exerted and no inducements were offered in order to elicit favourable responses.

4.4.2 Anonymity

In order that the identity of participants is honoured, no names appear in the text. Codes have been constructed bearing the location gender and age of the participant. By way of example a male person from Kirkwall aged 52 would be denoted thus: KW-M52. A full list of the codes and locations is provided in Appendix 4 (pps. 332-336)

4.4.3 Storage of the corpus data

The identity of the participants has been kept separately from sound files and transcripts. There is no means of cross referencing the material and only the researcher has knowledge of the identity of the individuals.

4.5 The fieldwork and the interview process

4.5.1 The role of the researcher

Macafee noted that “It is notoriously difficult to record spontaneous broad dialect speech.... So much depends on the fieldworker’s rapport with the interviewee, that

the fieldworker's own personality, background and social skills are the crucial factors determining the success of the interview" (1994:34)

It is important in connection with the social context and the relationship between and interviewer and informant that the interviewer must be aware of his/her personal views without prejudicing the outcome of the interchange.

A number of the interviewees were known to the researcher – or they knew his identity from work undertaken elsewhere. In a small island community it is not possible to be anonymous as there are organisations and working environments that cover a large part of Orkney. This familiarity did not appear to be a disadvantage and it did not influence the way in which the fieldwork was conducted. In all forms of research where individuals are interviewed, the researcher must act in an impartial way. It is important to guard against researcher bias – personal viewpoints must not obstruct or influence the material in any way. Within the context of the interviews in Orkney, personal viewpoints had to be suppressed and any elaboration on points raised was discussed in an impartial and non-judgemental manner.

All interviews were undertaken using Orkney dialect as this was the natural speech of the researcher and all the participants. Interviews were usually carried out in the homes of the informants and took place in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. The body language adopted by all parties was positive and seating was dependant on the layout of the houses of the individuals. Eye contact was established throughout and, prior to the interview, the informant and researcher engaged in general conversation.

This was conducive to the openness and frankness of the discourse between both parties.

Thomas (1982; 63) sums up the problems experienced in research in Wales describing as follows the researcher's dilemma: "to an extent, the comparability of this (interview) data is dependant on his maintaining this constant neutrality. On the other hand, his ability to establish a rapport with the informants, and thus obtain sufficient linguistic data, is dependant on non-neutral characteristics. In fact, these person characteristics may even be the cause of his inability to persuade some individuals to be interviewed in the first place". (Thomas, 1982 cited in Macafee 1994:52). This was not the case in the interviews undertaken in Orkney where a rapport was established with all informants and there were no refusals to be interviewed and recorded.

4.5.2 The recording of the interviews

Interviews were recorded using a Sharp Mini Disk Recorder and a small cassette recorder for back up purposes. A small microphone was used and set on its plinth in an unobtrusive place on a small table. Most participants were not fazed or adversely affected by the presence of recording equipment although some might have initially been nervous and lacking in confidence. Overall this did not affect the interaction and was an effective alternative to taking extensive field notes.

4.5.3 Generic issues

The understanding of terms such as dialect, SSE and code-switching was not a problematical issue. In terms of the word "dialect" the informants would comment on their use of dialect and sometimes indicate that they did not use many "old" words.

All informants understood the use of SSE and would often refer to this as “speaking proper”. Code-switching was a term not recognised by many participants but, when the researcher explained the switch between dialect and SSE, then the terminology was understood.

Differences between reported attitudes and actual behaviours were not significant. As all interviews were recorded it was possible to monitor any anomalies between the content of the interview and how the participants actually voiced the words. The rapport between all parties resulted in a mutual understanding and overall the way in which the interviews were undertaken led to a collection of valuable material on the issues surrounding the use of dialect in Orkney.

4.6 Analysis of the data

4.6.1 Analysis of the survey data

The data was analysed was carried out manually by the researcher. No electronic means was employed and any percentages involved in the quantitative analysis were calculated with assistance of a standard calculator.

4.6.2 Transcriptions and analysis of the interview data

One of the issues that is often raised in connection with the volume and content of ethnographic interviews is the necessity to report the interviews in their entirety. As Ochs (1979) has postulated, selectivity is unavoidable and indeed desirable and should be the result of informed choice. Within the scope of this thesis, it was prudent to be selective as this led to a more effective and concise analysis which highlighted the factors and features relevant to the topic. Ephemeral material such as informal

comments and hesitation such as “well let me see” were not included in the text and interview reports.

As identified elsewhere, semi-structured interviews were the preferred method of data gathering for this thesis. This was more effective than participant observation as it was imperative to extract the perceptions of individuals about the use of dialect and their attitudes towards the vernacular.

Methodological questions are often raised in connection with transcription and Davies advises that: “It is difficult to justify altering actual words and style of speech (i.e changing regional or class-based dialects into a standardised form) to make it more accessible to the audience” (2008:127) This was crucial to the understanding and reportage of the interviews in Orkney as those were carried out in the vernacular.

All the data was transcribed manually without any use of electronic assistance. Most of the interviews were transcribed but seven interviews were not documented in this thesis as part of the overall data corpus as those were pilot interviews. The orthographic conventions to represent non-standard speech were based on the *Orkney Dictionary* and *Orkney Wordbook*. (See Appendix 3) Other speech was represented in conventional orthography, or as heard by the researcher.

The transcriptions were carried out on a word-for-word basis and the criteria for selecting direct quotations were based on the response given by the informants and how pertinent it was to the research questions guiding the study. Some interview questions were answered in an illuminating way, which succinctly described a

particular topic within the interview. As mentioned by Ochs (1979) and discussed earlier in this section, selectivity is desirable and effective. Macafee (1994) also emphasises the importance of distilling comments into a manageable summary of a particular area of research.

The methodology described within this chapter fulfilled the needs of the researcher in terms of eliciting the perspectives of the informants on the social and cultural factors that have influenced the use of dialect in Orkney. The interviews and survey covered all the salient points included in the research questions and the fieldwork and findings are fully discussed in the chapters that follow. With the benefit of hindsight there are ways in which the study could have been improved. Those reflections are covered in Chapter 9.

Chapter Five

Interviews with individuals in different island and parish settings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the interviews carried out with 10 families along with individual interviews.

The fieldwork will be discussed in four areas as follows:

5.2	The Islands	Sanday
		Westray
		Shapinsay
		North Ronaldsay

5.3	The towns	Kirkwall
		Stromness

5.4	West Mainland	Harray
		Sandwick
		Stenness

5.5	East Mainland	Holm
		Tankerness
		South Ronaldsay

The families are featured followed by the individuals in each location. Any similarities or differences are highlighted and comparisons made as appropriate. This Chapter will cover the fieldwork which is the main focus of the thesis: the perceptions of the social and cultural factors that have influenced the use of dialect in Orkney. Chapter 6 builds on this chapter and covers the extended interviews with 9 informants. Attitudes toward the use of dialect permeate through the research and the background to the formation of those ideas is explored in both Chapters 7 and 8.

5.2 The Islands

5.2.1 Sanday

This family consisted of the grandmother SY-F68, daughter SY-F44 and her daughter SY-F23. SY-F68 was born in Rousay and went to the island shool. Dialect was always spoken at home and both her parents were born on the island. After primary school she went to Kirkwall Grammar School, “the first time I realised there wis different sounds as weel as words” After gaining the required qualifications she went to Teacher Training College in Aberdeen where she “had a horrendous time because me speaking wis no whit it should hiv been.” SY-F68 had speech therapy at the College in order to comply with the demands of the profession at the time (this was in the Sixties).

She then came to Sanday as a primary school teacher and was expected to teach the bairns in English as this was Education Committee policy at the time. “ but I always spoke Orcadian when the bairns wir pittan their coats on at night”. Before she gave up teaching she noticed that the pupils had picked up a lot of English words. She said “.....and noo I notice that me youngest grandbairns don’t really speak Orcadian

There is so many folk moved in tae the island over the last 30 years or so..." In social situations SY-F68 says she will change if there is a lot of people who are not native Orcadians. " It is difficult to stick to pure dialect because so few folk understand whit we are saying!"

SY-F44 was born in Sanday and both her parents were born in Orkney. As mentioned her mother came from Rousay and her father from Sanday. Dialect was always spoken at home but, as she recalls, " Mum wis a teacher so we always knew if she wis no pleased wae us as she wid speak in her teachery voice.". At school all the class were Orcadian and she did not think that teachers tried to change the way they spoke. SY-F44 completed her education on the island and did not attend the school in Kirkwall. She went to work in a local shop in the village at Kettletoft. Dialect was spoken at all times although, as the population changed, she had to change to accommodate the new people. After getting married and bringing up the children SY-F44 and her husband took over the Kettletoft Hotel," that is when I changed me voice without kennan I wis doin it..... people would say there she is chantin away again!"

At the time of the interview SY-F44 and her husband were running a Hostel and Craft Shop on the island. She commented that she used a different voice from that used within the family. In social situations she said that if she was speaking to English folk she would alter the way she spoke but " I think you should speak the way you were brought up."

SY-F44 mentioned the influence of the incomers and mentioned that " me peedie boy age 11 speaks English... fairly different from the lasses..... but then I speak different

fae me Mum”. She said that her son was the only Orcadian boy in the class and that all his friends were English children. “ The way of spaekin is nearly bound tae change as so many folk hiv moved into Sanday..... but I mind me granny and granddad using words I never use and me husband uses words that I never use.”

SY-F23 was born at Balfour Hospital in Kirkwall but has lived in Sanday for the last 21 years. She attended school in Sanday where the teachers never said that pupils should not speak Orcadian but “ most of me class wis English so I did speak some English at the school ” SY-F23 attended the Kirkwall Grammar School from the age of 14 but said that she did not need to change the way she spoke as “ most of the kids wis fae the North Isles anyway” She then attended the Orkney College taking a Certificate and Diploma in Tourism Studies.

In social situations she indicated that many of her friends were English and comments “ In the beginning we spoke English but noo they hiv come to ken us we probably speak more Orcadian to them”. SY-F23 said that some of her friends would even try to use some of the Orcadian words but “ me peedie brother uses less Orcadian words than me”. At work, in a local hotel, she might use SSE or dialect depending on who she was speaking to at the time. She says that so many folk are moving about that it is changing the community and “ incomers hiv changed the way folk speak” On the question of the media she thought that it might influence the younger ones but not folk of her age! SY-F23 concludes or concedes that, “ I do not want to change but I likely will..... I don’t use the words that me mum and granny uses.....”

This island family displays some interesting features. They all mentioned the impact of migrants to the island and the apparent need to change their way of speaking. The youngest member of the group mentioned that some of the incoming population will try to use the dialect. This is not suggested by her mother and grandmother who seem to view the situation from the perspective of lack of comprehension if they do not use some form of SSE. The use of dialect at home still seems significant although the youngest sibling aged 11 had chosen to speak SSE as he was influenced by his peer group.

One other notable comment from the family is that they all said that they speak differently from each other. Individual members of the family state that they do not use the same words as their parents or grandparents. Ironically it would appear that there is less prescriptive guidance provided in school education compared with 40 – 50 years ago. While SY-F68 was expected to teach in English and promote the use of SSE, both SY-F44 and SY-F23 were not chastised for using dialect at school or college.

In the next paragraphs some individual interviews from Sanday will be featured. One person was over 80, one about 60 years old, with another person in the 45 – 64 age group and a lady in her forties.

Interview SY-F84

SY-F84 was born in Kirkwall in 1922 and moved to Sanday when she was 15. Both her parents were born in Westray and dialect was spoken all the time at home. No dialect was allowed in the classroom “ It hid tae be proper English or you wid hiv got

a clip on the lug!” Throughout her youth and married life she worked on farms either as a “servant lass” to the Thomsons at Stove or as a partner with her husband on a small farm in Sanday. Dialect was used at all times in the years from her earliest memories and through her married life. “Lots o fokka on the island and the only incomers wid hiv been the Doctor and the minister.”

One of the biggest changes noticed by SY-F84 has been the people that have moved into the island over the past three decades. All her neighbours are migrants and she says that they have changed the way that she speaks: “ I don’t think that I hiv changed the way I speak but ither folk says that I hiv. I suppose that you hiv tae speak a bit o English and knock aff the corners or they widna understand a word you were saying.”

Interview SY-M67

Born in Sanday in the 1940s, both parents of SY-M67 belonged to Sanday. Childhood was spent in the North end of the island with little travel out of Sanday. Dialect was spoken all the time: both at home and at school. He does not remember being told to speak a certain way at school but realises that most lessons were delivered in English. Most of his working life has been spent on the family farm with little need for any switching other than “ordering stuff ower the phone”.

“In the last few years me dialect has gone a good bit.” he says. Due to the changing population and the increasing number of visitors to the island it has been necessary for SY-M67 to use English words “ if you don’t they kinda luk at you so you hiv tae adapt tae the situation” He thinks that dialect is bound to fade out and thinks that little dialect will be heard at the Sanday School today.” I ken fae me own grandbairns

that you will no find any o them speakin very strong ... as the majority of their class is English.”

Interview SY-M54

“ I wis never told no tae speak dialect at home but be mannerly and such like,” according to SY-M54 who was in the 45-64 age group. Mostly dialect was spoken at the Sanday School, but when he went to the school in Kirkwall there was no instruction to speak SSE. SY-M54 did not believe that he had a strong Orcadian accent anyway and felt that throughout his work he has had little need to change much to accommodate other people.

In his social and community activities SY-M54 is involved with the Church of Scotland and other bodies on the island. When he is speaking a public or reading a speech he says that, “ I wid speak BBC English wae an Orcadian accent.” He mentioned the apparent expectations of people to change from the vernacular and the way this might affect them “ It is a pity that folk are losing their identity by no spaekin dialect and maybe meed tae feel stupid... in fact..... there is a wee bit o pressure tae speak English”

Interview SY-F40

SY-F40 was born in Sanday which was the birthplace of both her parents. As a child in the late sixties she grew up in a home that was very Orcadian with no external influences to affect the use of dialect which was spoken at all times. At school she does not recall being told to speak any particular way. SY-F40 went to Kirkwall

Grammar School for her secondary education and she says that she did change at this school but reverted to Orcadian when she came back home to Sanday.

Asked about how her family speak she said “I think that they speak they way they want but the lasses are owlder so they speak more Orcaian whereas me youngest son is peedier so speaks differently fae the others.” SY-F40 acknowledges that she changes according to the folk she meets as the island population has changed since she was young. She says “I don’t think I change unless that person is no gaan tae understand me.” Dialect use should be encouraged according to SY-F40 as “it is part o wir history”

5.2.2 Westray

The Westray family were composed of a grandmother, daughter and granddaughter. WY-F66 was born in Westray on a hilly farm on the west side of the island. In the house dialect was always spoken and, as one of her grandparents lived with them, old words were used that are never heard any more. At primary school the use of dialect was not allowed. WY-F66 went to Kirkwall Grammar School and modified the way she spoke “or wae wad hiv been meed a fool o by a lot o the ither bairns.”

WY-F66 went to Teacher Training College in Aberdeen and said that this was fine as there were a number of fellow Orcadians at the same place at this time. After qualifying as a teacher she returned to Westray and worked in the primary classes. The children were encouraged to speak English by their teachers. WY-F66 married a teacher who was also a native of Westray and “wae spoke in a way that we thowt wis Orcadian.” She did realise that it was not in a broad Orkney accent.

Now retired but very active in community work, she does change her way of speaking according to the participants but the population in Westray has changed so “if you are speaking tae a wide variety of folk then you choose a medium that is suitable for everybody.”

WY-F44 was born at the Westside Schoolhouse in Westray. Dialect was spoken at the house but, as both her parents were teachers, “that likely influenced me.” She said that they were never told it was wrong to speak dialect in the classroom in Westray. She does remember when she went to Kirkwall Grammar School “we wir meed a terrible fool o becis o wir accent and it still happens!” This did not cause much change but maybe led to some moderation of the dialect.

WY-F44 got married and brought up a family in Westray. She says that she probably speaks broader than she did at home as her husband has a much broader accent. After a number of years, she became a classroom assistant. She then decided to follow in her parents’ footsteps and become a teacher so trained in Aberdeen where she did change in order to be polite. WY-F44’s first posting was in Kirkwall where she did not use much dialect in the classroom but “I winder whit it wid be like if I tow in Westray.”

Dialect would be used at all times in social interactions with fellow islanders but “if they wirna locals, or if they were incomers, I wid switch without realising I wis doin it”. WY-F44 said that she would speak slower to people who were not familiar with the dialect: “sometimes you need to be pedantically English afore they understand you”

According to WY-F23 dialect was spoken most of the time at home but, at school, she had to speak in a different way to be understood. At Kirkwall Grammar School it was necessary to “speak a bit posher or risk ridicule fae other students.” She commented that other islands do not seem so fond of their accents. At university in Glasgow WY-F23 said she would change when speaking to other students but “the folk I bade wae got used wae the way I spoke.” “They were more interested in the dialect rather than making a fool of it”

During holidays in Westray WY-F23 said that she make an effort if she was talking to strangers at the Heritage Centre: “I wid slow doon an aafil piece!” She did not think that she code-switched very often as “it would be an insult to speak to visitors the way I speak to me Granny.” She mentioned that her brother, aged 16, “chants something chronic and it is gettan warse.” She goes on to say that the reason for this is possibly to fit in and avoid ridicule but “it doesna go doon to weel at home.”

Some difference may be observed between this family and the family from Sanday. One of the features mentioned was the question of ridicule when using dialect. No member of the Sanday family mentioned this due to the fact that the dialect is not so recognisable. The attitude in the home is also worthy of mention. As WY-F44 was brought up with two teachers, it appeared that their use of dialect was more curtailed whereas WY-F23 mentioned that “chanting” was met with disapproval at the family home. WY-F44 mentioned that her dialect had become stronger since she married. This would indicate the influence of adoption of dialect traits by association. The influence of incomers was discussed by each of the family members as this could alter the way in which the island develops in the future.

Interview WY-F77

WY-F77 spoke about her early recollections as a child in Westray. There was little social interaction with the rest of the island. “Wae kinda kent them at the Sunday School a peedie bit thoo kens but the rest o the island wir complete strangers.” Dialect was always spoken at home and WTY05 said that she could recognise differences in other parishes in Westray. At the one-teacher school she had to speak SSE and asked her views on what she felt about that she commented “No very much I’ll tell thee that – it wis jist a thing wae hid tae do”

On leaving school she worked on the farm and never changed her dialect except when visitors arrived from Scotland. She said: “If wae geed tae the toon wae wir telt tae speak right or folk widna understand whit wae wir saying.” WY-F77 thinks that she has changed her use of dialect to some extent and mentions the changes in the island that has affected the way of life. A lot of social events and utility services have been provided along with improved transport. “Thir a lot a eens comman in and I am no right sure whit will happen in the future.”

Interview WY-M40

WY-M40 has lived in Westray since he was born in 1967 and has spoken dialect all his life. At school he felt that the pupils were not advised to speak dialect and “teachers wir trying to teach us the right way to speak accordin tae them.” He did not go to the grammar school in Kirkwall but “jist bade home and started tae work on the fairm.”

His current employment is still farming but he has developed his interest in art and has opened a small gallery adjacent to his house. " I meet a lot o folk fae different pairts o the world and I do speak a little more proper but still use a bit o dialect as they like to hear it." WY-M40 uses his artistic talent to feature some of the local names of places on the island. This encourages an interest in the dialect as visitors will ask what they mean and where they originated.

Apart from meeting visitors to the gallery, WY-M40 says that he would use dialect at all times when he is with his family. When he is meeting with business advisers or using the telephone he does change. He firmly believes that dialect should not be restricted " it is pairt o the place and wan o the things should be kept alive." WY-M40 is aware that change is inevitable due to the changing population and "wae hiv two young eens and they dinna speak so much dialect as I wid dae."

Interview WY-M36

At home in Westray, WY-M36 spoke dialect all the time as parents were both born on the island. He said that he spoke "a bit of a mixture at school" but was allowed to speak dialect when it was not a proper class situation. At Kirkwall Grammar School for one year " Westray yokel comes to mind and you were made fun o." It did not make him change "... as it is embedded in you."

WY-M36 said that his current employment was "a bit o anything and everything from lorry work, fireman at the island airport, running a hostel and 2 to 3 months an year going away doing gospel singing. When I do tours I hiv to wattir it doon," but WY-M36 says that the visitors enjoy hearing the dialect.

On tour singing at kirks, youth clubs, conventions “you hiv tae chant but you cannot get away from the fact that you soond Orcadian.” WY-M36 says that he does switch but reverts to dialect at home as his wife is from Shetland. He thinks that his children are bidialectal and “speak a mixture o posh and Westray dialect. When you meet an uncan body you just switch oot o manners.” He thinks that Orcadians should keep dialect in every situation they can do as it is a valuable part of the heritage of Orkney. “It will be difficult to keep as there is a lot of folk moving in to the island wae a different lingo and that is goin to creep in” The important thing, he concludes was “to speak it at home.”

Interview WY-F28

“We just spoke the way we wanted at home and at the school” according to WY-F28 who was about 28 at time of interview. Teachers at the Pierowall School were all Westray born, with one exception, so this might have influenced the way she communicated but it was not a serious issue. Going to the Kirkwall Grammar School was a realisation and “you got shouted at on the street and they always made a fool o wir Westray accent.” It was necessary to make adjustments and try to keep the resolve to speak in the local tongue.

After spending time at Edinburgh Art School where she had to change to accommodate the non Orcadian community, WY-F28 came back to the island and became absorbed in community life. She says that she would speak dialect most of the time but can change to suit whether it is visitors to the craft business set up with her

sister or at a trade fair in Birmingham. "It is no fair to use dialect to folk that disna come fae here... that is rude. It is essential that people make themselves understood."

She thinks that it is important to keep up the dialect and it is very fine to hear it spoken but "we should not be oddities and the use of hyper- corrected dialect is over the top and silly." Changes are good for the island and they stop stagnation: "we need to move on." WY-F28 appears to have a more conciliatory attitude towards the use of dialect by understanding its value but realising that life on the island will evolve.

5.2.3 North Ronaldsay

Interview NR-F75

NR-F75 was born in North Ronaldsay and both parents belonged to the island. At home dialect was always spoken "unless you got visitors." At school she said that she was made to speak dialect but "most of what we said was Orkney dialect anyway" Some of the children were not Orcadian, being families of the doctor, teacher or lighthouse keeper. NR-F75 left school at 14 and worked at the manse as a servant. She said that, "Wae hid to try and improve wir English a peedie bit." She spent 4 years in Aberdeenshire where little Orkney dialect was used in everyday life but then returned to North Ronaldsay to get married.

NR-F75 has used dialect all her life and says that the incomers to the isle have "just come roond tae understand it and use it a bit too!" She indicated that she would change a bit for the benefit of people who might not understand and admits that "dialects come and go jist like fashion." According to NR-F75 dialect is a valuable

part of the heritage of Orkney but is concerned at its continuation in North Ronaldsay due to the structure of the population and the lack of young people on the island. "If young eens go sooth they likely need to speak English or they get no whar." The future of the island is uncertain and NR-F75 hopes that enough folk will be interested in working in the small craft industries and that it keeps the island alive.

Interview NR-M70

NR-M70 thinks that "North Ronaldsay is dying oot a fair bit noo." There are fewer families that speak the broad dialect and what remains is spoken within those families. "Twa North Ronaldsay when they are speakin together speak far faister and wid be difficult for ootsiders to have any idea what they were saying." NR-M70 thinks that he has changed as he has been involved with a number of organisations on the island where it was necessary to change. "But you revert back very quickly when you are speaking amang yir ain folk."

NR-M70 sees the main influence on dialect as a combination of education and the influx of incomers along with the media. In the "owld days folk meed their own entertainment and spoke tae each ither and would meet at the shop or the smithy.. bit noo they sit home and watch the TV and the island his become a lonely place in some ways." As for the future of North Ronaldsay he is optimistic and thinks that it depends on the amount the Council will invest along with the ability of the incomers to adapt to the way of life and maybe pick up bits of the dialect as some of them try to do at present.

Interview NR-M82

NR-M82 was born in North Ronaldsay 82 years ago. At school he had to “speak proper as they did not want that North Ronaldsay way of speaking.” When he left the school he worked at farms and did a little lobster fishing. In 1942 he was called up to the army and served in India and Burma. “ Some of the soldiers thought I wis Irish by the way I spoke.” He was demobbed in 1947 and returned to his home island where he continued to work in farming and fishing.

NR-M82 said that he sometimes changes the way he speaks: “ When I am spaeking to strangers I hiv to change but it is bad to do sometimes” He says that he has forgotten about some of the old words and comments that " when I wis young I haired a lot of funny words."

When asked about changes he had seen and the future of the island NR-M82 was reflective. He thought that the daily aeroplane service had been a big benefit to the island but mentioned the falling population and the increase in motorised transport. "Some difference to when I wis young when all we had wis horse and maybe an oxie yoked to a cairt"

5.2.4 Shapinsay

The Shapinsay family were made up of the father SP-M70, living on the island, and his daughter SP-F43 along with her daughter SP-F22. Both female members of the family live away from the island due to their employment.

SP-M70 was born in Shapinsay as was his father while his mother came from Sanday. When he was a child dialect was mostly spoken at home although his mother was a teacher and tried to encourage her children to speak English. At school SP-M70 was not allowed to speak dialect and, when he went to Kirkwall Grammar School, he comments “ that wis the time when the Director of Education wis doin his best to eliminate dialect as it would limit the opportunities of the young people.”

SP-M70 left the school at 18 and came back to work on the family farm in Shapinsay. Although dialect was spoken in the home with his wife and family, he soon became involved in committee work with the National Farmers Union of Scotland which took him away to meetings in Edinburgh. “They were all country guys so they spoke their dialect and I spoke mine.” In 1981 SP-M70 became an elected member of the Orkney Islands Council and rose to the position of Vice Convener. Over the years he says that he has done his best to speak English “ for the simple reason that you are tryin to make yourself understood.” At the council meetings he thinks that there has been a relaxation in that “ more folk speaks dialect noo – I think that I speak more dialect than I did 10 years ago.” He has also observed changes in the farming world a number of words disappearing as the particular activity no longer takes place. “ We used to speak aboot piece time when you hid your cup o tea or sharing aff when you hid finished cutting the oats wae the binder” He had some strong feelings on the future of the dialect in Orkney: “ Orcadian is a spoken language learned at yir granny’s knee and this attempt tae preserve it by writing it doon is nonsense as a lot o words are difficult to write doon. It his tae be preserved on tape as this will keep a record o the diffeent inflexions fae all roond Orkney.”

SP-M70 thinks that about half the children at the school speak English and “ me own grand daughters jist do not speak dialect – it is a kind o Orkney version o English wae a lot o Americanisms thrown in.” He believes that this is caused by folk moving into the island and says that they are valuable to Shapinsay and have added a new dimension to community life but “ the old words are beginning to go because you hiv tae make yoursel understood in conversation.”

SP-F43 was born at the hospital in Kirkwall but spent her childhood at the farm in Shapinsay. Raised in a traditional island home dialect was spoken all the time and most of her friends were Orcadian so there was no need to change. When she went to the Kirkwall Grammar School she felt the need to change although recognised other variations of dialect from Westray, North Ronaldsay along with parts of the Orkney Mainland.

SP-F43 says “it was definitely the case that when folk used English they wir an assumption that they were educated.” After College education SP-F43 eventually got a position with Orkney Enterprise and she admits that she has to try to speak “correctly” especially when discussing issues with politicians and clients. She says that she would switch from dialect to SSE because of the status of the person as well as to be understood.

“It is important to preserve the individual character of an area and I do not think we are doing enough. Obviously written dialect would help with more local performances and public use of dialect.” SP-F43 thinks that the amount of movement between the isles along with media pressure has had a marked affect on the use of dialect.

In contrast to both her grandfather and mother SP-F22 says that she does not use very much dialect at all. Although she was brought up with Orcadian parents SP-F22 did not have powerful ties with the Orkney way of speaking: “ I spoke a bit o dialect but never had a strong Orkney accent and a lot of my friends were not from Orkney.” She also thinks that her mother’s accent was not very strong so this might have influenced her as well.

When she went to university in Edinburgh, and said that other students said that “ it wis funny because people seemed to think that you were saying things wrong.” She said that she did not use many dialect words but might have said “puggy” instead of stomach for example. “ I like the fact that it is different and sometimes wish that mine wis stronger.” SP-F22 says that she now speaks SSE nearly all the time as her work as a Customer Services person with British Gas means that she is more or less obliged to change in order that people can understand what she is saying.

A thought that the incomers to Orkney has probably had a big influence on the use of dialect and “this is what affected how my dialect has moved away” She indicated the need to speak SSE as it made her communication with colleagues and friends more effective.

This family provide a number of contrasts in that the use of dialect between grandparent and grandchild is particularly marked with SP-F22 using very little dialect and speaking in a Scottish accent. While SP-M70 thinks that preserving dialect in print is nonsense his daughter thinks that more dialect needs to be collected in this way! The main influence on SP-M70 seems to have been through his parents while

SP-F22 said that she was affected by her friendship with non-Orcadians. All three members talked of their need to code-switch to fit a particular situation. This provides a notable example of the adaptability and flexibility of the Orkney dialect speakers.

Interview SP-M66

Born in Shapinsay with his father from the island and mother from the Mainland of Orkney, SP-M66 spoke dialect at home all the time. After leaving school he worked in Shapinsay on the farm and also as janitor at the school.

When he was at the school he said that the teacher would speak dialect if “he wis on a good mood,” so the class appeared to have a certain amount of flexibility in terms of the way they use of language.

SP-M66 has observed many changes of population on the island. When he was young it was mainly Orcadians but, in the war years (1939 – 1945), there was an influx of service personnel and “folk wis nearly bet to ken whit they wir sayin.” People also moved in from other islands and took over farms or worked at Balfour Mains which was the largest farm on the island.

Over the years SP-M66 believed that he had not changed his way of speaking: “there is a lot o English folk moved in but I do not think it affects the Shapinsay folk and their way o speakin. I jist tried to speak me usual and I would feel silly if I geed roond speakin proper aa the time!”

SP-M66 has seen many changes on the island in his lifetime. Transport has improved and people even move around the island more freely than they did in the days of his youth. Farming has become more mechanised and little grain is grown on the island. He thinks that there is a good community life on the island but does not know what the future might be in terms of dialect. With the changing population and the lack of young people the Orcadian way of life and traditions could be threatened.

5.3 The towns

5.3.1 Kirkwall

The family in Kirkwall were made up of KW- F67, daughter KW-F49 and her daughter KW-F23. KW-F67 was born on the island of Wyre which is close to Rousay. Both her parents also came from the island so dialect was always spoken in the house “ Just the ordinary isles way o speakin.” After getting married and starting a family KW-F67 worked on the small family farm and also did some shifts at the crab factory on the neighbouring island of Rousay. Although most of the workers were fellow Orcadians some students came to work and they “hid to speak tae them a bit differently so they could understand.”

After moving in to Kirkwall KW-F67 did some cleaning work at the local hospital and the Royal British Legion. She then set up a small bed and breakfast establishment to cater for the visitors to Orkney. When communicating with her guests she said: “ I automatically change bit I don’t ken why. Every noo and again you will get in tae the way they are speakin’ . ”

KW-F67 thought that there were no occasions when dialect should never be used but “you hiv tae touch it up a peedie bit because if you didna folk fae away wid not understand whit you are sayin’.” She believes that there seems to be a revival of interest in the dialect but realises that it needs to be used in order to survive.

KW-F49 was born on Wyre and attended the small school on the island until she was 12 years old. She then went to the Kirkwall Grammar School which meant boarding in the School Hostel in Kirkwall. She realised that she spoke differently. “Thet would pick at the way I spoke and I think I change around that time as the bairns fae ither islands could made me aware o the the difference and made a fool o’ me accent.”

At the time of interview KW-F49 had a job as a post-person and said that she did not think that she needed to change. Maybe her experiences at the School Hostel reinforced her interest in the dialect. “Why try tae shy away fae yir beginnings?” she commented but then said that she would not become too “precious” about it saying, “I widna get tae the seeknan stage aboot speakin dialect.”

KW-F49 thought that the biggest influence on the dialect has been the folk moving in to Orkney along with the media. She has observed changes with her family in that “me son is more broad than the lasses but his father is fae Westray so that might have influenced him.” As for the future of dialect, “unless they are going to get it in schools it gaan tae go.” KW-F49 indicated that dialect is part of the make up of the people of Orkney but some people are almost embarrassed by their dialect. She thinks that if more young people were encouraged to use it then it might survive.

KW-F23 was born in Kirkwall with Orcadian parents – father belonging to Kirkwall and mother born in Wyre but moved to Kirkwall in her teenage years. As a child KW-F23 was never instructed not to speak dialect either at home or at Papdale Primary School. She said that she just spoke the way she wanted but “compared with my friends I sound more Orcadian. Some o them are fae the toon but they soond more proper.”

When she went to Kirkwall Grammar School KW-F23 did not change her way of speaking but there were students from other islands and a lot of migrant pupils. She felt that her use of dialect had been influenced by both her sets of grandparents who were all from different areas of Orkney.

In her work in a travel agency KW-F23 has to adapt her speech dependent on the client and on the mode of communication. “ On the phone you have to speak more proper as you need to make sure you get your point across” As most of her friends were Orcadian , KW-F23 did not feel that it was necessary to change for them in social situations as there was no need to impress or create a false way of speaking.

KW-F23 did not think that the use of dialect should be restricted and “it is Orkney and it’s Orcadian and it wid be a shame if we lost that ... words like peedie and pootsy for example.” She does not think that dialect would ever be taught in schools as “teachers might think that whit is the point o’ teaching dialect as you will no need it for a job.”

The Kirkwall family represent an interesting dichotomy. Although two members of the family were born on a small island they have lived in Kirkwall for a large part of their working lives. It is possible, however, that the island background has influenced their use of dialect as KW-F23 mentioned that she spoke differently from her contemporaries even though they were all born in the town. Both KW-F67 and KW-F23 said that they felt a need to change to accommodate the speech situation while KW-F49 saw little need to alter her speech. All three members of the family expressed the wish that dialect should continue but there seemed to be differing viewpoints on the possibilities of education with KW-F49 thinking it could be taught in schools and her daughter saying that teachers would be unlikely to appreciate the value of the study of the Orkney dialect.

Interview KW-M38

KW-M38 was born in the sixties with both parents from Kirkwall. Dialect was mainly spoken at home but, at school, the teacher would tell pupils to speak “properly.” He felt that this was somewhat ironic given that many of the teachers were pure Orcadians. At Aberdeen University, where he studied geography, students seemed to have little difficulty as many of them came from rural areas.

KW-M38 became an elected member of the Orkney Islands Council and “there was a lot o Orcadian speakers and I wis most pleased that council meetings were conducted in a fairly broad dialect.” In his work KW-M38 uses some SSE when speaking in formal situations but conducts much of his duties in dialect. “I think that folk should speak dialect in public whenever it is possible as there is a bombardment o global English on the media noo-a-days.”

KW-M38 thought that there has been “ a big number o folk moving into Orkney and this has made a fair difference to the way folk think they should speak.” He thinks that attitudes and values have sometimes been ignored but is optimistic that the dialect will continue provided that local people value there local culture. He said, “ I feel that it is the right way to communicate and feel comfortable speaking it – it will no die oot”

Interview KW-F24

KW-F24 was born in Aberdeen in 1984 but has lived in Orkney since she was a few days old. Both her parents were born in Kirkwall. Dialect was never discouraged in the home and grandparents were often amused at “peedie folk speakan dialect.” When she went to primary school she remembers being “told to speak proper.” At the Kirkwall Grammar School she was exposed to students from other islands. “The Westray ones were something else and you had to listen quite hard but you soon picked it up.”

At the University of Edinburgh where she studied psychology KW-F24 said that she had to “ tone the dialect doon a bit as there were no other Orkney folk there.” When she talked on the phone to her mother she was told that she was chantan (using an affectation) but she said that she soon changed back into the dialect when she got back to Orkney. In her seasonal work with Visit Orkney she said that visitors liked to hear the accent but could not understand the words.

KW-F24 held the view that dialect used should not be restricted and it was a valuable resource. She thought that it could be taught in schools as part of the history lesson and said that if she had family in the future that they would encourage its use. Asked about the changes in Orkney KW-F24 said “I suppose that a lot more folk have moved in and this has diluted the dialect – particularly in the islands.”

5.3.2 Stromness

The Stromness family consisted of a mother aged 92 and her daughter in her fifties and her son aged 33. SM-F92 was born in the parish of Harray - “bit the hoose is a rumble o stanes noo”. Her parents were born in the West Mainland and she has spent all her life in Harray. At school she never remembers being reproved for speaking the dialect and most of the pupils were from the parish. At 14 she left school and went out to work “I wis a servant lass up in Dounby and it wis a long waak.” She says that she spoke dialect all the time. Having married at 20 years of age she had worked on the farm ever since.

When asked if she ever changed for anyone SM-F92 commented “ Weel I speak Orcadian tae all the neebors bit I maybe change a peedie bit for the minister!” She did not see any disadvantages of speaking dialect said that incomers might find the isles folk difficult to understand. Asked what the greatest influence on the use of dialect she said, “ weel maybe the attitudes are different and I think the young eens feel they should speak proper.” SM-F92 said that she had not travelled very far in her long life but did visit some places when she appeared in concert parties. She could not recognise the different variations within the islands with the possible exception of South Ronaldsay.

“Dialect is special bit it is bound to change as there is a lot of folk coman in ... I think we will lose a lot o wir owld words as there an awfil lot o sooth folk in Orkney and it always seems to be getting more.” SM-F92 thinks that if people could be encouraged to use the words then the dialect might survive.

SM-F57 was born in Harray and went to the primary school in the parish where she had no recollection on being told to speak SSE. “All the bairns were born and bred Orcadian so everybody spoke in Orcadian.” When she moved to the Stromness Academy for secondary education there was little change as most of the teachers were born in Orkney.

When she married SM-F57 moved to Stromness where she worked in the family business which was (and still is) a thriving butcher shop. The only time she changed her way of speaking was to be understood. Her family chose the way they wanted to speak but “wir lasses spoke proper whereas (my son) wis and still is, very Orcadian.” thought that the reason for this was that both her daughters were working in an academic area where the use of SSE was expected. Although her son had been at university, his work had not precluded the use of dialect.

SM-F57 believed that the use of dialect on local radio or as a form of entertainment was a positive thing and should not lead to ridicule. At Folk Festival events, for example, the compere using dialect on stage enhances the experience for the visitor and “lets them see part o wir culture.”

As for the future of the dialect, SM-F57 said “ It is definitely dying oot and less folk are using it.....I would like to think that it widna disappear but it is goin to be doon tae the schools tae keep it goin’.”

According to SM-M37, “ Time goes on and things change ... the way folk speak definitely changes and has changed over me 37 years on the planet ... there are folk that are singular in their use o owld words.” Both his parents are Orcadian and dialect was always spoken at home. At school SM-M37 was discouraged to use dialect and commented “ I got a steel rule across me knuckles in primary for no speakin the Queen’s English and that wis fae a teacher fae North Ronaldsay!” Things were different at Secondary School as the English teacher was a keen dialect speaker and actively encouraged the use of dialect both orally and for written exercises.

SM-M37 went to university and returned to Orkney where he works a part-time presenter on Radio Orkney and runs a music shop in Kirkwall. On the radio he tries to use the dialect as much as possible and, indeed, presents a programme in which a panel of six have to guess the meaning of a number of dialect words. SM-M37 does speeches in dialect at weddings but does not think that dialect in itself is inherently funny.

SM-M37 has trenchant views on the influences on the dialect: “I wid say that the folk moving in tae Orkney wis the beginning o the end.... the first waves o incomers wid been the start o it.” He said that he did not want to sound xenophobic but “ it certainly wattird doon the linguistic pool o folk.” SM-M37 did think that the dialect would

change over the next few decades and would be unrecognisable to the speech used at the present time.

5.4 West Mainland

5.4.1 Harray

The family in the parish of Harray was made up of the grandmother HY-F91, her daughter HY-F57 and her daughter HY-F30. HY-F91 was born in Costa in the parish of Evie and her parents were both Orcadian. Dialect was always spoken at the school and at home. She stopped school at the age of 14 and went to work as a house maid until she got married. She then moved to Harray to the smithy where “wae jist spoke dialect ael the time as it was ael Orkney folk – if a stranger cam he wis kinda kept tae the wan side.” HY-F91 did indicate that she would have changed for the doctor or the minister as they might have had difficulty understanding what she would have said in dialect.

There were a lot more social activities when HY-F91 was young. People would take their instruments and walk to neighbouring parishes to provide music for a wedding. In the home old traditions of music, singing and dialect stories were upheld. HY-F91 said, “the like of his (us), when we wir home wae ael danced and sung and wae wid hiv visited when it wis moonlight..... folk even took their knitting wae them!”

HY-F91 has seen a number of changes in her ninety years and admits that “some o the owlder folk wid haen different words right enough.” She said that there was no point of using some of the older words, as a lot of younger folk would not know what they mean. “There is a lot o folk coman in tae Orkney and they cunno catch right whit wae

say bit wae can ken whit they say though” HY-F91 realised that the migrants had been an influence on the way the dialect is used in Orkney. She summed up the situation from her perspective by saying, “ The times are changing and its a faster life noo ...there is no time to say hello ... no like the good owld days when folk helped wan anither more.”

HY-F57 was born in Harray and both parents came from the Orkney Mainland. At home dialect was always spoken and at school it did not appear to be an issue. Most of the children were Orcadian and all the teachers also belonged to Orkney. After leaving school she went to college in Plockton on the West Coast of Scotland for two years.

“ I didna change very much but jist slowed doon a bit as most o the students were fae the Western Isles and Inverness.”

On her return to Orkney HY-F57 did some domestic work then started to work in school kitchens both in Stromness and in other parts of the Mainland. She married a teacher who was also an Orcadian and brought up their family to use the local dialect and feels that she does not need to change: “ weel I feel you shouldna hiv tae change but if a person is no understandin’ you then communication is the main thing so you wid change enough to accommodate them.”

In social activities HY-F57 said that she would use dialect most of the time although she sometimes finds it difficult to read as it appears to be a spoken language rather than a written language. She thinks that it something that should be kept in use and

young people should not be chastised if they use dialect. HY-F57 performs Orkney dialect songs on stage and suggested that this would be an ideal medium for ensuring the continuation of the vernacular.

HY-F57 said the biggest change she has seen is community life. Although some organisations such as the Women's Rural Institute (WRI) still thrive in the community, schools and churches have become centralised and “folk travel more and women go oot tae work when I wis young all the hooses had a wife body in them”. HY-F57 thought that the influx of oil workers to Orkney about 30 years ago possibly started the process of change which led to the emergence of different attitudes and the dilution of language among the people of Orkney.

HY-F30 was born in Orkney and says that dialect was vigorously encouraged at home because it was discouraged at school. In primary school pupils might be corrected if they said hoose instead of house. When she went to Stromness Academy most of the students spoke the way they chose but “I tried to be less Orcadian so folk didna tease you as there wis an idea o being fae the country.” When she went to university in Glasgow she chose to change her accent as it facilitated more effective discourse with fellow students. She also changed the speed of speaking and avoided the use of local Orcadian words.

HY-F30 moved back to Orkney where she completed research for a Ph.D and was able to revert to the dialect in most circumstances. She said that she would not impose it on people who could not understand all the nuances and the words. In her work as

an Archivist Assistant she could use dialect but had to temper it to fit the people who were involved in the interchange.

HY-F30 was adamant that the use of dialect should never be restricted. “I have grown up to realise how lucky I am tae hiv a dialect like Orcadian.” The best way to ensure that it lives in the community is to record it as the spoken word and she thinks that this has been carried out for some time through sound archives along with written work carried out by Dr Hugh Marwick and others.

The changes mentioned by HY-F30 focused on the social activities where more people watch television in the home rather than socialising in the community. “Folk are no hivan musical nights oot like they used tae.” She thought that people moving to the island do not appear to have much contact with some of the younger generation and remembered when she was at school: “In me school days a lot o folk moved in tae work in Flotta ... young folk wae families .. and that is when you could see a lot o dialect change in the schools as the kids copied their friends.”

This family have all been brought up in a rural environment and each member of the family mentioned the community life in their interviews. They seemed to suggest that the demographic changes along with the evolving attitudes might have played a part in the frequency of dialect use within the parish of Harray and beyond. While HY-F91 was not exposed to the pressures of education outside Orkney HY-F57 spent two years at an establishment on the West of Scotland while HY-F30 attended Glasgow University for about 7 years. This period of external education appears to have

reinforced the interest in dialect rather than those informants speaking a more standard variety when they returned to Orkney.

5.4.2 Sandwick

The Sandwick family were made up of the grandfather SW-M76, his daughter SW-F46 and granddaughter SW-F20. SW-M76 was born in Birsay but “wheeled” to the farm in Sandwick, as an infant, and “his been there ever since.” He went to school in Quoyloo in the parish and remembered the construction of the aerodrome at Twatt during the Second World War. Some of the workers’ children came to the school but “we didna change the wey that wae spoke and they hid tae listen tae his (us). There wir that few o them compared wae his!” SW-M76 stopped school at 14 and worked on the farm. Dialect was spoken all the time even though the troops occupied the area for a number of years at this time. “Wir folk hid tae speak better English than wae did becis they wir speakin tae the troops and hivin contact wae them.”

Although he has spoken dialect throughout his life, he felt that he had to change at the present day as people would not know what message you were trying to put across. He says that this even relates to the younger members of the family “me grandbairns are no kennan whit I am sayin half the time!” SW-M76 observed some of the younger generation using Orcadian words on the streets or shops in Kirkwall. He thought that they were influenced by American television programmes as they appear to watch a lot of television. SW-M76 thought that the greatest influence on the use of dialect might stem from travel and folk moving around much more than the days of his youth. He felt that the migrant population might have had some impact as “the bairns

are being taught by English folk at the school.” He also said that activities such as herring fishing must have affected the people of Stromness and the island of Stronsay.

With regard to the future SW-M76 was non-committal and said “ things hiv changed in a way I never thought they wid change and wae uncertainty in farming noo there might be changes that will turn ower the whole balance o life in Orkney”. As a final comment on the Orkney dialect he felt that the Shetland people keep their identity and have a more positive attitude towards their dialect. In Orkney “ wae are mixed up wae more folk and it is difficult for his (us) to keep wir language as the Orcadians seem to hiv an inferiority complex and feel they need tae change.”

SW-F46 was born in Orkney and both her parents were also born in the county. She spoke dialect all the time at home and has no recollection of having to change at the school in Dounby. On moving to Stromness Academy there might have been some small changes to the way of speaking but no significant alterations took place. SW-F46 left the school, worked in the retail business and then married and brought up three children.

“ I ken fae me own bairns they watch a lot o TV and pick up American accents and words so I think that this has been the main way that dialect has been affected.” SW-F46 worked in the Tourist Centres in Stromness and Kirkwall so felt she had to change for them but said that she did not make a conscious decision to code-switch:

“ You get the sense that you are no makin yourself clear but some Orkney words can be difficult to translate directly into English” She commented that some visitors enjoy listening to the local dialect, “ and they like to hear a local voice.”

SW-F46 thought that dialect was lovely to hear but it appears to be filtering out as time passes and “ an awfil lot o folk livin here noo that’s no local folk so its obviously gettin’ thinner all the time.” She also realised the changes between generations and how these might impact on the use of dialect among future generations. “ I am no as broad as me fither and the bairns are no as broad spoken as me so that is some kind o indication that it is getting weaker all the time.” She was somewhat pessimistic about the future of dialect and did not see any solution to the situation because “ times move on and I am afraid it’ll jist disappear .. it will be something that folk use to amuse wan anither in the future and this is quite sad.”

SW-F22 has spent all her twenty two years at home in Sandwick with her parents and two other siblings. Dialect was spoken at home and at school she was neither encouraged nor discouraged to use dialect. She said that when she was at school she did not realise how broad the Orkney dialect appears to be and said, “ I pretty much spoke dialect all the time at home but mum and dad use words I do not use and of course so does me granddad!” Orkney writers were featured in classes at Stromness Academy so this gave SW-F22 first hand experience of the way the local dialect could be used.

After leaving school SW-F22 was fortunate to get a place at a university in North Wales. At the university she said that she did have to consciously change her way of speaking, “ I was brought up with the dialect so did not realise some words were Orcadian – especially in the first year ... so now I tone it down a lot.” She thinks that clarity is the main thing and it is crucial that people understand what is being said.

The greatest influence on the dialect according to SW-F22 was the amount of people who have moved in to Orkney along with the people who have gone away to study. “Until I went to university I did not realise how different the dialect was and noo I feel more Orcadian away fae home because of the whole culture that goes along with it and not just the accent or the dialect.”

SW-F22 thought that there had been many changes in Orkney over the past 30 – 40 years, Not only the “ folk fae sooth staying in Orkney but young people going away to university and no coming home.” She believed that some of the changes had meant less freedom and that there was a danger of “overselling” Orkney in terms of the tourist market. Too many advances in transport and fixed links with the Mainland of Britain– such as a tunnel across the Pentland Firth - could destroy the way of life and the culture along with the dialect

5.5 East Mainland

5.5.1 Tankerness

The family from Tankerness consisted of TK-F70, her daughter TK-F49 and her daughter TK-F16. TK-F70 was born in Tankerness and attended the school in the parish until she was 12 when she went to the Kirkwall Grammar School. She indicated that pupils were allowed to speak the way they chose at the schools and the teaching staff were mostly Orcadian by birth. At school in Kirkwall she noted that the children from the North Isles “sounded different fae us.”

When she left school, TK-F70 worked at the Tankerness Post Office where she met people from all over Orkney. She also acted as telephone exchange operator so did

have to change in order to be understood. In those days she said, “ you kent everybody but noo you hardly ken your next door neebir.” Although she has seen many changes over the last 20-30 years TK-F70 was still living in the house in which she was born. In the parish she said that she has mixed with all the people and has been involved with the church and the WRI but “ I have spoken dialect most o the time and did no see the need to change even for the minister.”

In order to ensure the survival of the dialect she thought that it might be possible to encourage its use in schools and at the college. “ I widna like to see it dying oot but there is so many folk comin in tae Orkney and all the places are changing.” She said that dialect possibly gave her a feeling of identity and that it was important that it was spoken whenever possible.

TK-F49 was born in Tankerness and lived there most of her life. Dialect was always spoken in the home as “me great granny lived wae is and she spoke owld Orcadian.” At school in St Andrews – the small parish within Tankerness – she can not recall being instructed on how to speak but when she went to the Grammar School in Kirkwall, “ it wis a shock goan fae a peedie school tae a big school, ” but she said that the pupils were never told not to use dialect. When she was a teenager she thought: “ Weel I maybe chanted a bit as I wis conscious o being kinda broad.” After she left school she worked in the Kirkwall Grammar School office so all the teachers were familiar and she felt that this did not require her to change the way she spoke.

Over the last twenty years TK-F49 has raised a family and has been involved with many groups in the community such as youth clubs, drama groups, the East Mainland

Agricultural Society and the Womens Rural Institute. She has also presented the request programme on Radio Orkney on a regular basis. TK-F49 believed that she did not change her dialect but perhaps altered the speed of her discourse in order that people from other areas might understand what she was saying to them. “I do not even change for professionals as it jist widna be me – I couldna dae that.”

TK-F49 thought that folk should be encouraged to speak dialect but it would be difficult to teach the subject and the population changes have altered the perspective on the way people communicate. “Me bairns jist speak the way they want tae speak but there is so many folk in Tankerness that are no Orcadian and it is jist changin’ the way folk communicate wae each ither as they hiv different dialects.” She concluded: “it would be fine if teachers wid encourage dialect at schools.”

TK-F15 was born in Orkney and both her parents were Orcadian. At home dialect was used and at school the students could speak the way they chose. Most of the people in her class were Orcadian except one boy from Nepal but “he got used tae it but it took a little while.” At Kirkwall Grammar School there was little change but more students were from south. TK-F15 said, “The English ones have started to change a little bit and they try to speak Orcadian noo as well which seems kinda weird!” She commented that her friends have told her that she sounds more Orcadian because of her rural background.

According to TK-F15 the greatest influence on the use of dialect has been the movement of people all over Orkney although the media might also have played a part. She thought that she did not switch much but, “if I do it jist so that folk will

understand me.” TK-F15 also said that she would recognise people from other islands and parishes as “ one of me grannies comes fae Westray.” She thought that the young people from Kirkwall speak differently from their counterparts in Tankerness “ some o the Kirkwall ones do not soond Orcadian.”

Dialect gave TK-F15 a feeling of identity but she was somewhat pessimistic about its survival and thought, “ that the language will definitely die oot as a lot of folk are movin away to uni for example and more people are movin in.” She hoped that she would not change very much but admitted that this might depend on the career path chosen, “ but I will try to keep a bit o it as it will show whar I come fae.

5.5.2 Holm

In the parish of Holm the family were made up of grandmother HM-F65 along with her daughter HM-F42 and granddaughter HM-F15.

HM-F65 was born in Holm to Orcadian parents; her father came from the island of Shapinsay while her mother was born in South Ronaldsay. At school in Holm she said that most of her contemporaries were Orcadian and she “never mind hivan tae chant during me school years.” When she left school she helped out on the family farm apart from spending 6 months at a catering course in Inverness. HM-F65 said that this experience gave her as feeling of independence and discover a world outside Orkney. She is sure that she had to modify her dialect and “ did get laughed at as me accent wis so broad.”

On her return to Orkney, HM-F65 spent some time working in Kirkwall but realised that she was “ never cut oot tae be a toon body,” and went back to agriculture as the wife of a dairy farmer. Her family were all raised to speak Orcadian as it appeared to be the most natural thing to do. One of her daughters received some comments at school that she “sounded like a country yokel.” but this did not deter the young HM-F65 from using the Orkney dialect. She commented on current attitudes as she received a phone call from her granddaughter who was on her mobile phone in Kirkwall. When she finished her call to her grandmother, the friends laughed and said that she had spoken differently and it apparently sounded somewhat amusing.

Diversification has been necessary in many farming areas and this also happened in the family when they decided to undertake tours using a small “people carrier.” HM-F65 trained as a tour guide and did tours with her own transport and on coaches for the cruise liner passengers. She did not use dialect on the tours but told her guests that she was modifying her language and slowing down in order to make herself understood. HM-F65 informed them that this was called “chantin” and it was courteous to speak in this way as visitors are paying to enjoy the tour.

On the topic of switching to accommodate people who do not understand dialect, HM-F65 said “ I suppose that a lot o folk think that they are bettering themselves by chantin but I don’t agree wae that as folk fae Glasgow don’t change for me.” She hoped that some dialect would be featured in school classes and that some people would be able to keep it alive in the community. “ I hope enough Orcadians keep speakin the dialect so its no entirely lost but I would be frightened that wae are a dyin breed and its only Orcadians that can use it.”

HM-F42 was brought up in a house where dialect was always spoken with memories of dialect stories and words used by her grandparents that are no longer part of the vocabulary. At school dialect did not appear to be an issue and students could speak the way they preferred. She went to Aberdeen University where she took a degree in Arts and Social Science and it was then she realised that her dialect was different “ I realised that it wis almost like speakin a foreign language so I had to modify it a bit.”

After graduation HM-F42 came back to Orkney and worked for a shipping agency so had to speak to a lot of people from outwith the islands. “ I hid tae make mesel understood and hid to be posh.” She got married, had a family and then decided to qualify as a teacher. She teaches young children aged 6 and 7 years old and tries to encourage dialect wherever possible “ I let the bairns speak the way they want and I do speak a fair amount o dialect in the classroom.”

HM-F42 thought that the main influences on dialect had been the people who have moved into Orkney although the media had played a part in influencing young people in the community. She felt that folk of all ages use less dialect then they did about 20 or 30 years ago. Although I used dialect most of the time she said that it was important that people were understood. She felt that she was a bit of chameleon, “ if I am speakin tae somebody that his no got an Orcadian accent I kinda slip into a less broad form o speakin.”

With regard to the future of the dialect HM-F42 said that there would always be a Orkney accent but the words would die out “ hopefully we will keep that lilt but the words will no be used so frequently” She concluded by speaking about the wider

aspects of community life and expressed her feelings for the continuance of the unique aspects of Orcadian life. “ I hope that the quality o’ life and the community aspect carries on and that folk keep lookin oot for wan anither. I hope that all that strengths continue no matter whit the world throws at us.”

HM-F14 was born in Orkney and was 14 at the time of the interview. She attended the St. Andrew’s School for primary education then moved on to Kirkwall Grammar School. “ I speak more Orcadian when I am home cos nobody at school speaks Orcadian so I kinda get oot o the habit.” Most of her class thought she had a fairly broad accent but many of the students were children of people who have moved into Orkney in recent years. “ It seems strange when you are livin in Orkney that they are getting on tae you for being broad Orcadian.”

According to HM-F14 the television and other media have possibly had the greatest overall influence on the use of dialect in Orkney. She thought that people hear the English and American voices and copy those rather than use the language of their county. Folk moving into Orkney have also been influential although there appeared to be fewer incomers in Holm than in some of the other parishes such as South Ronaldsay. HM-F14 would like to stay in Orkney as “ you feel safe and everybody kens wan anither.” Asked about her use of language she said she did not want to change: “ I want folk tae ken whar I am actually fae and the dialect gives me a feeling o identity.”

5.5.3 South Ronaldsay

This family lived on the most southerly parish in the Orkney Islands with clear views of the hills of Northern Scotland. SR-M87 was interviewed along with his daughter SR-F52 and her daughter SR-F22.

SR-M87 grew up on a farm in the parish and, at school, the students were told not to speak Orcadian, They spoke English in class and it seem to be natural as that was the way that was expected at the time. Shortly after leaving school war was declared so some work at the naval base on the island of Hoy provided income. “ Wae got better pay or wae got on the fairm.” He said that there were people from many places but he did not change his dialect and “they hid tae pit up wae it.” SR-M87 was sometimes annoyed with the workers from the Western Isles when they conversed in Gaelic as “ I didna ken a damn word they said”

After the onset of war SR-M87 had to work on the farm and it was one of the farming activities that changed his life and led to the development of an important tourist attraction. While ploughing one of his fields in 1957 he observed some burnt stone for which he had a use on the farm. After working the soil in preparation for sowing he realised that he had found a found a Bronze Age house. In 1958 some further investigations revealed a tomb with skulls and eagles claws enclosed. Following a number of archaeological excavations and much work the Tomb of the Eagles was eventually opened to visitors in 1975.

In his later years when he was no longer physically able to work at the farm SR-M87 assumed the role of tour guide and explained the site to visitors from all over the

world. This meant that he had to make alterations in the way he spoke. “ I jist his tae go more English or they widna ken a damn word if I spoke in Orcadian.”

SR-M87 thought that the use of dialect was less frequent and that younger generations had been influenced by external factors. “ Dialect his fairly disappeared wae younger folk becis o the TV and wae all the English folk comin in..... some of me grandbairns do not hiv the words that I hiv ... me bairns wir browt up tae speak Orcadian but the grandchildren have changed the way that they use dialect.”

SR-F52 attended Tomison’s Academy in South Ronaldsay, for her primary education, where she always spoke in dialect “there wir no incomers and the teacher was local so wae jist spoke Orcadian.” At the Kirkwall Grammar School she was more aware of the linguistic differences of the children from the North Isles of Orkney but her own use of dialect was not significant. After leaving school SR-F52 went to Yorkshire where she took a two year college course in remedial gymnastics. She said that it was necessary to consciously change the way she spoke in order to be understood. Following her graduation she spent 6 months in Canada where SSE was essential as the use of some Scottish and Orcadian phrases led to misinterpretation and occasional embarrassment.

On her return to Orkney SR-F52 reverted to her Orcadian dialect as soon as she landed at the airport although she did use dialect when speaking on the phone to her parents. After she married she became a builder’s labourer for a short while after which she worked at the village shop in St Margaret’s Hope. At both those jobs she

used dialect most of the time as most of her colleagues and customers were local people and did not feel there was any need to change.

For the past 20 years, SR-F52 has worked at the Tomb of the Eagles - as the attraction is still run by the family. In recent years a new visitor centre was opened and the number of visitors has increased. She says that she has to adapt her use of dialect to fit the clientele. "If it is Scottish folk you can speak Orcadian but if its anybody fae across the border or fae foreign countries then you hiv to slow doon and speak in a more English way."

SR-F52 thought that the biggest influence on the dialect was the people that have moved in as the children at the school have had an impact on the way that Orcadian children should speak. Although she said that she did not change because of the status of people SR-F52 admitted that, if she was talking about the artefacts in the visitor centre, "even to local folk, the spiel still comes oot in English." She highlighted the importance of dialect in her life and the need that it is used by future generations. "It is somethan special and worthwhile keepan and I wid encourage kids to use it the whole time."

SR-F22 was born in Orkney and attended schools in St Margaret's Hope and Kirkwall. She said that the use of dialect was not discouraged at school. At the primary school most of the pupils were from the surrounding parishes but the situation at the Grammar School was different with pupils from all over Orkney. SR-F22 said that she noticed some differences with voices from the North Isles and would participate in the ridicule of this way of speaking.

After school SR-F22 went to New Zealand for one year where she “had a few troubles with the dialect.” She was compelled to change as the people could not understand certain pronunciation of words containing the letter “r” for example. She then returned to Scotland and went to Edinburgh and Aberdeen Universities. “They knew I wis speakin different so I had to speak slower and slightly posher.”

SR-F22 returned to Orkney to further her training in physiotherapy so occasionally the use of SSE is required in order that patients understand. She also helped out at the Tomb of the Eagles which also meant switching between Orcadian and SSE. “ When I am oot socially I speak mostly Orcadian and the more drink I consume the more dialect I use.”

SR-F22 thought that the main influence on dialect had been the incomers and the increased mobility of people which included the flow of Orcadian students going to study at universities in Scotland and England. She believed that the future way of speaking will be less Orcadian because “you can’t make people speak Orcadian as they might get the words but will not hiv the accent.” She said, “ I will always hiv me “twang” but will change if I hiv tae.”

5.6 The Main Themes

The main themes covered in the fieldwork were the use of dialect in school along with the influence of migrants and the need to code-switch. Attitudes towards the use of dialect and the future of the vernacular were also areas of discussion.

The Islands

On the use of dialect in school, the older age group (65 and over) in Sanday, Westray, North Ronaldsay and Shapinsay said that they were discouraged from using dialect in the classroom. All the other age groups recalled that, while lessons were delivered in English, they were not instructed to speak in a particular way. Some teachers would have chastised pupils for the use of dialect in situations where this was felt to be inappropriate. The younger age groups (16-25) indicated that they were influenced by other class members and the amount of dialect spoken would be reflected by the number of dialect speakers in the class.

The influence of migrants was mentioned by all age groups. Due to the influx of people to Sanday and North Ronaldsay, there was a more diverse range of dialect and the linguistic variables were clearly evident. The ways in which community life had changed was highlighted and the use of dialect in social situations was a feature of the choice of communication to be employed. Relationships were established between the migrants and the native population and, in Westray and Shapinsay, the influence of migration was less prominent than in Sanday and North Ronaldsay.

Code-switching was practised, at different levels, by all the informants. The main reason was to be understood but in the islands where migration had been greater then switching from dialect to SSE was more frequent at all age levels. There was no evidence of speech divergence in the islands as the local people adapted their vocabulary in accordance with the level of dialect understanding.

Attitudes towards dialect varied from island to island. In Westray there were issues around the ridicule by other Orcadians as the pronunciation and style in Westray was seen as more accentuated than other places in Orkney. This affected the confidence of dialect users on the island and tempered their vernacular in different speech situations. Informants in Sanday and North Ronaldsay suggested that there was some peer pressure to change the dialect in order to converse with the incomers. People from those islands indicated that the migrants were keen adapt and learn some vernacular idioms. In Shapinsay there was less influence from migrants and the proximity to Kirkwall meant that the islanders were less affected by significant population change.

The Towns

Most informants from Kirkwall and Stromness were not reproved for speaking dialect at school. Some had spent their formative years in the islands or parishes but they were free to choose their mode of communication. One of the observations of school experience was that most of the teachers were Orcadian and therefore understood dialect. The younger members of the family commented that they had to speak SSE at school and the attitudes of the teachers varied from class to class. Island pupils were identifiable by their variation in intonation and use of vowels.

The influence of migrants was mentioned by the town dwellers but was less prominent than the attitudes of informants from the islands. There were comments relating to “folk moving in fae the sooth”. There was greater accent and dialect tolerance due to the demographic mixture of the population.

Code-switching took place in order to facilitate effective communication and the amount of dialect used was related to the speech or work situations. This varied according to occupation and the perceived need to use SSE in order to be understood. Some people would change for the minister or the doctor while others would mirror the speech of the interlocutor. The process of diluting or “watering doon” the dialect was mentioned by a number of the informants.

Attitudes were influenced by the perception that it was necessary to speak SSE in order to succeed in a variety of occupations – especially in the field of education, business and other professions. Peer pressure and ridicule were important but less significant than the islands. Most people would try to use dialect and appreciated the value of the vernacular. As the populations of Kirkwall and Stromness were less subject to in-migration then the attitudes of the town dwellers were conciliatory and the informants were more flexible in their approach to the use of dialect within social and formal contexts.

The Parishes

Five parishes were covered in the main fieldwork interviews: Sandwick and Harray in the West Mainland; Holm, Tankerness and South Ronaldsay in the East Mainland. There were varied responses in connection with the use of dialect at school. All the informants recalled that there some discouragement of the vernacular was experienced within the context of the classroom. Some people would be able to choose the amount of dialect within the school while others were not aware of any prescriptive directives from the academic staff. It was apparent that the nationality of the teacher influenced the amount of dialect spoken in class. The number of migrant children in class also

affected the way of speaking. The younger age group (16-25) were influenced by their peers and the social activities connected with the schools.

The influence of migrants was mentioned by many informants in all age groups. One notable feature was the effects of war-time on the parishes when servicemen were stationed in Sandwick, Holm and South Ronaldsay. The senior age group (65 and over) interacted with the service personnel through the sales of farm produce and the construction of defence buildings and the Churchill Barriers. Dialects and accents from different parts of Scotland and England were spoken in the community and the local people had to accommodate in terms of the use of words and phrases along with use of grammar. In the early years of the oil industry the workers were engaged in the construction on the island of Flotta but most of the families lived in the parishes. This also led to changes in the use of dialect by the local people.

Code-switching was practised throughout the parishes and the pattern followed that of the towns and the islands. The need to change from dialect was related to the levels of understanding within work and social activities, the levels of familiarity with the recent migrants and the number of local people within a village or district within a parish. The senior school children from the parishes (aged 16-18) attended the Kirkwall Grammar School and the Stromness Academy. The need for them to switch was seen as expedient in order to facilitate the optimum benefits of their education. The young people would speak dialect within the family situation and with their friends in the locality. All informants indicated that they would change to be understood but also to avoid embarrassment or mis-interpretation of messages.

Attitudes on the use of dialect varied from parish to parish but there was a consensus that dialect would be used when possible. The local people valued the vernacular and perceived as an important part of the heritage of Orkney. Some parishioners had never experienced variations of dialect from other islands while others believed that there was no need to change the way of speaking as people from other parts of the United Kingdom maintained their styles and registers when they moved to Orkney.

5.7 Summary of Chapter Five

The comments from the informants clearly indicate that the perception of Orkney dialect has been influenced by the migration of people to Orkney and the emigration of people from the islands. As people moved from their island farms into the Mainland of Orkney, properties were purchased by incomers from outside the area. This resulted in a shift of dialect use and changes in the way that the vernacular was used in a variety of speech situations.

Dialect speakers relate changes to the increased social mobility, the cultural interchanges with migrants and the variations in demographic structures. Values and beliefs have been shaped by the appearance of new members in the community

The attitudes of the informants remained buoyant and they expressed their viewpoints in positive undertones. Most speakers sought to retain their use of dialect and expressed their intention to engage the dialect in discourse when this would not impinge on effective communication. They felt that dialect fulfilled a useful purpose; that it should be taught in schools; it should be encouraged on the local radio station and in regular discourse within a variety of speech situations.

Within the wider context of variations in dialect and the way that it has been affected by greater movement of people, the results suggest that those variations and changes have been exacerbated by movement and mobility. In Westray and North Ronaldsay, for example, the informants cited the need to moderate the dialect in order to reduce ridicule and divergence from other Orkney people and migrants. Travel to other parts of the UK and the improved transport opportunities led to changes in vernacular in order to accommodate people who were not able to comprehend the Orkney tongue.

The interviews focused on five general themes: early years, education, work, social activities, and attitudes. Interviews were carried out with 10 families of three generations from 10 different locations. In addition individuals were interviewed from those locations along with other districts. It was felt that this would provide a wide perspective and act as a balance to the families.

Some of the interviews took place in rural locations or island communities while others were held in the two towns in Orkney. The familial interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to examine how the members of the generations within one family might differ and how similarities might be observed. One of the criticisms or problematical issues might be that the majority of the three generations were female. This transpired as a result of the availability of candidates for interview so the male perspective in terms of generational views might need to be looked at in future research.

In an effort to redress the balance some males were interviewed from a number of locations. The qualitative material gathered as a result provided a comprehensive and

valuable source of material and a wealth of well thought out and stimulating comments were expressed on the use of dialect.

Looking at some of the factors that emerge from the interviews, the main areas of concern focused on the perception of dialect by others and the need to be understood through effective communication. Barriers such as ridicule from others and negative views in connection with the prestige value of dialect were mentioned and bi-dialectal examples were given where some people spoke different versions of SSE and dialect depending on the speech situation.

Old words disappear according to the informants - those may be terms for farming or fishing practices or other activities no longer appropriate to modern life. This may be inevitable but a number of people are still able to understand and recognise those terms. Younger people, in the age group 16-25 would mention that their parents or grandparents would use words that they no longer have in their vocabulary.

The process of "chantin", where the local population assume a somewhat pretentious method of speaking which is not their usual mode of communication, led to some comments by a number of the people interviewed. Chantin might take place when someone is on the telephone to a non-Orcadian in an effort to be understood. The process might also be used in order to create a favourable impression and this is often ridiculed by others should they overhear the interchange taking place.

Dialect does not appear to be under threat although the migration to Orkney and the emergence of modern styles of communication has influenced the mother tongue. It

was suggested that dialect should be used more in schools and promoted as a credible and accepted means of communication in the modern world. There was some pessimism with regard to the future of dialect as the older people (65 and over) seem to think that it would disappear. From comments expressed by other age groups however it would appear that dialect is still used in everyday life and there is an awareness of its value and richness.

Chapter Six

The Themes emerging from the Extended Interviews

This chapter will consider extended interviews with nine informants from across the age range and from different locations in Orkney. The topics focused on the early part of their lives, school days, work and community life along with social activities. The common theme was the way in which dialect was used and their attitudes towards language; the main social and cultural influences in their lives; the changes in Orkney and how those had impacted on their lives; view and on their perspectives of the future.

In Chapter 5 three generations from 10 different locations were featured and their views and perspectives contrasted and compared. The individual interviews from those locations were less detailed and did not follow the same threads of this chapter. In the interviews that follow the theme mentioned will be followed and it will be noted that the informants were allowed to traverse across a number of areas in order to exemplify, clarify or justify their thoughts.

6.1 School days and the early years

SN-F21 was born in Orkney and both her parents are Orcadian. Living in the parish of Stenness with her family she said that dialect was spoken in the home at all times. At school her teachers were not Orcadian and when she came home from school she would speak English. “ Mum hid tae work in keepin’ me spaekin’ Orcadian. Me folks wanted me to speak Orcadian because it’s who we are and whar wae are from so we

should speak it.” At Stromness Academy she probably spoke less Orcadian as this was almost the norm at Secondary School.

WY-F19 was born in Kirkwall but has spent all her childhood at home in Westray. Both her parents belong to the island so dialect has been used all the time at home. At the primary school she had one Orcadian teacher but the rest were “fae sooth”. She was not told to speak in any particular way, “ I think that I just spoke the way I wanted. I wis nivir told not to speak dialect and the teachers spoke proper becis they wir supposed tae. WY-F19 thought that, as the island had a fairly strong dialect, “ few folk that widna understand the wey wae speak”

WY-F19 went to the Kirkwall Grammar School at the age of 15. As all the students from the islands were accommodated at the School Hostel, this was conducive in cementing relationships and ensuring that all the local people could integrate with each other: “ When you wir at the hostel you can speak the wey you want becis everybody is fae the isles anyway.” At the school, however, she admitted that was necessary to speak differently as some of the teachers might not have understood the accent and the dialect words. The speed of the interchange also had to be regulated “ Wae did hiv to slow doon when wae wir speakin to each ither as some o the folk wid hiv hid no idea whit I wis saying”

In his interview KW-M29 revealed some pertinent observations on the use of dialect. Although only 29, he was still able to use dialect at most times and has a very distinctive form of speech akin to someone from a different generation. In his early days he was exposed to dialect: “I think that when you are home aboot, whit you pick

up there is basically the sam as you dae at school bit you are no telt off aboot it... so you maybe hiv a home dialect and a school dialect. Personally speakin the fact that me granfaither stayed wi me folk and me, weel that wis a huge influence. I wis an only child so no many fokk to mix wae”

KW-M29 spoke about his school days and how he seemed to conform to speaking SSE. “Always at school you wir expected tae speak reasonably proper ... and.... I mind if you hid tae read oot something, in English lessons, you wid hiv been laughed at if you read it oot in dialect.” At the secondary school, in Stromness, there might have been more pressure to suppress the use of dialect. “There might hiv been a bit o conflict between toon fokk and country fokk and the owlder bairns might ridicule the country bairns You wid hiv been called country yokels if you spoke a lot o dialect”

BY-F41 was born in Orkney and lived in the East Mainland in the parish of Holm until she was 19. She then got married and moved to Birsay on the North West coast of the West Mainland. At school all the children were Orcadian. “It wis a peedie school with only 5 bairns in the class and no incomers at that time” The Head Teacher came from Yorkshire but had taught on the island of North Ronaldsay so “ was weel wunt wi the Orkney wey o speaking”

At the age of 12, BY-F41 went to the Kirkwall Grammar School which she described as “a bit o a shock tae the system wae more folk and a bigger number of bairns wir own age. She was aware of having a broader accent but she did not seem perturbed by

the humorous remarks: “ the lasses fae the toon wid say that wae wir yokels fae Holm bit I didna takk offence.... I thowt it wis fun.”

SM-M37 was born in Stromness and spent his childhood years in the town. Dialect was always spoken in the house as his mother was born in Harray and his father came from the island of Hoy. “I suppose I spent a lot o time wae me maternal grandmother in Harray and the parish seems to have a reputation for the wey dialect is spoken there.” At school, most of the children were from Orcadian families and the teachers also belonged to Orkney or had connections with the islands. On one of his report cards the teacher wrote: “ This pupil appears to have some difficulty in speaking English.” As SM-M37 relates: “ I wis a big talker at school..... dialect wis jist whit I wis wint wae if you had been told to speak English at school you wid likely hiv done it.” He went to Stromness Academy for secondary education where he did not think that he had a strong accent compared with “some o the country pupils.”

KW-M44 was born in the parish of Tankerness on the east side of Mainland Orkney. His father was born on the island of Sanday while his mother originated from the island of Westray. Dialect was spoken at all times in the house and “ the dialect words wis wans fae the North Isles so some o the Tankerness folk couldna understand at times.” This led to some problems at the school as there was an active movement against the use of dialect. “ Wae hid a heid teacher that actively discouraged it and would actually ridicule you if you cam oot with a dialect word in class..... ither kids wid be encouraged tae join in it almost turned dialect use into a social stigma.”

KW-M44 did not realise he was erring and could not understand why he might have been considered as an awkward or subversive student. The school experience had a diluting effect on his accent and use of dialect. He resented the way he was treated because of his dialect and almost felt that there was a prejudice against dialect from people moving into the parish from outwith Orkney. He left school at age 14 having suffering excessive bullying. “ Em.... It wis... I suppose the accent and wey o speaking ... I cam fae a poor family and wae wirna weel off so the bairns made me life hell I only fand oot that I wis dyslexic much later in life..... so I wis written off by the system..... me folks decided that I wid work on the fairm bit I jist hated it... it wisna for me.”

HM-M57 was born in the parish of Harray where he attended the primary school. Dialect was always spoken at home and at the school. The school roll at this time was composed mainly of local children as this was in the period before the influx of oil workers and other migrants. At Stromness Academy the English teacher was a fervent admirer of Orkney writing and culture so, “Wae wir never telt tae change although wae di hiv some pupils fae oot o Orkney Maybe fae the lighthouse station, but that wis about the height o it.”

WY-F88 was born at the Ness in Westray over 88 years ago. She recalled her school days when she had to walk 4 miles to the school and also to the church on Sunday. She mentioned that the “ Rapness wans spok fairly different fae the North side folk. It was far more owld fashioned.” The north-side people were situated in the far side of the island near to the pier and the village of Pierowall.

WY-F88 gave an account of the mode of travel which was on foot with no cars only horses. She did not travel far and was only in the town once when she was young. Also," the only time I saa the northside fukk was at the owld kirk picnic."

WY-F88 went to the same school in the parish until she was 14 and was the youngest of 14 children. She recalls her mother baking one dozen "bunnos" (bannocks) every day and their main meals were made up of fish, kale and pork. She had six brothers " so I wis gled tae get tae the skule tae get away fae the boys." The population of the island when she was young was 2,000 compared with 550 at the time of the interview. (July 2005)

KW-M70 was born on the island of Eday about 70 years ago. He went to the primary school where " all the bairns were born and bred in Eday and in the class the taichers wanted you to spaek English" KW-M70 spoke about Dr Hugh Marwick coming to the school, as the Director of Education and " He wis a stickler for English and he insisted wae spok English and I didna like it..... it meed you feel kinda inferior."

As was the custom when he was young, KW-M70 went to the Kirkwall Grammar School to continue his secondary education. At the age of 12 this was something of a contrast and he had to adjust his way of speaking to accommodate the situation. "They tended to tak the micky a peedie bit I gradually changed and dropped the words that wir too broad..... and noo me family dinna spaek so broad and they even pick me up on certain words."

6.2 Work and post-secondary education

SN-F21 went to Orkney College where she thought that she spoke more Orcadian than she did at the Stromness Academy. She thought it was “something to do wae the folk that is here and also I am owlder and realise that I don’t hiv tae change the wey I speak.”

SN-F21 has worked at Skara Brae as a Seasonal Assistant for the past 2 years. This Neolithic Village is one of the finest preserved villages of the period in Northern Europe. It receives over 60,000 visitors each year with the peak season from June to September. She said “when I am speakin tae tourists obviously I can’t speak broad Orcadian as they widna understand whit I am sayin’especially, if it its foreign people.” This is not always the case, however, as “some o them want me tae say something in Orcadian.”

When she is on holiday from school or at home at weekends, WY-F19 has a part time job at Tulloch’s shop in Pierowall Village. “ I use dialect most o the time if it is Westray folk I am speakin tae... but if its tourists I hiv tae try tae speak English.” She then highlighted an example of the need for clarity of information when attempting to provide simple instructions to people who may not be attuned to the local speech. “Yesterday I his visitors in the shop and I hid tae write doon whit I wanted to say. I am no sure whar they wir fae bit all they needed wis some directions tae the Hotel!”

In consideration of her plans for the future, WY-F19 hopes to train as a primary teacher which will require training either in Aberdeen or Edinburgh. “This is kinda scary for me and I suppose I will hiv tae change so that folk will understand whit I

say.” She hoped to retain her Orcadian identity, however, as this was something that might be difficult to conceal: “Even if I change the words, I am still gaan tae hiv the accent and I am nivir gaan tae be anything but Orcadian”

When he left school KW-M28 did a variety of jobs including work in a local shop where he helped in stocking shelves and other background work. He said that he did not alter his speech very much but, “ I wid hiv had to alter if I hid been more in front o the public.” He then went on to talk about the ways in which people seem to modify their use of dialect when speaking to the doctor or the minister. His view on the inappropriate use of dialect to professional people was illustrated by saying that, if you went to the doctor for example with an upset stomach you “ widna say min I’m been most godless seek” as this would be impertinent! In the case of ministers of the church KW-M28 said that they tended to speak English anyway. “It is maybe lukked on as no showin no enough respect if you are using a local and parochial way o speakin’ .” He mentioned the comment of a man from the East Mainland who apparently said: “ Ye ken I think that God is Eenglish cis you always speak proper tae him if you want tae be understood”

KW-M28 then spoke about his work as a tour guide and his current position as custodian on one of the farm museums. He made some interesting observations on the way that his version of the dialect was treated by the assessor. “ As much as they wir keen tae hiv somebody wae an Orkney dialect, emphasis hid tae be on a clear pittan ower o whit wae wir sayin..... I mind when wae wir bein assessed The assessor said that I wis too strong.... I got up and spoke ordinary and she said that, “I think that people might have difficulty understanding you.” ” He changed to accommodate the

situation and passed but added that folks on the tour buses enjoyed the lilt and the use of dialect and did not care if they did not recognise all the words.

In his present position as custodian at Corrigall Farm Museum in Harray, he has been given more freedom of expression and is able to assess the way the way he conducts any guided visits. Visitors do not always want a conducted tour but “I try tae get a balance that I am usin’ dialect words and a sort o accent but gettan through tae them whit I am doin” Some of the visitors might be more interested than others and some local people might converse in dialect with him while the, “younger wans might kinda laugh if you wir usin dialect words thinkin’ my God he is as owld fashioned as the hills”

After leaving school BY-F41 got a job at a veterinary practice in Harray. She always had a love of animals and would like to have been a veterinary surgeon but thought she did not have the academic ability to follow this career path. BY-F41 seemed to have little difficulty in settling in to a new job and moving to another parish on the Orkney Mainland. “A lot o the Birsay fokk wir very broad and will come oot wae the kind o spaekin me grandfolk wid use.....for example usin words like “fornent” (opposite) and “cer” for car.” She seemed to very comfortable speaking to farmers and, after a few years got a job at the Orkney Auction Mart as a clerk.

For the past 5 years BY-F41 as worked as the Secretary of Orkney Livestock Association, a group that arranges sales and deals with much of the documentation in connection with livestock farming. The post involves constant contact with farmers so

she hears a variety of dialect from across Orkney and uses dialect at most times in her daily life.

SM-M37 went to Napier University in Edinburgh where he studied languages and business management. "You did use words that folk widna commonly use but as long as you didna mumble folk would likely kent whit you meant." He said that he did have to make allowances and speak clearly but did not try to speak English at home in the islands: "It is a terrible black mark if you chant..... I find it embarrassing if I hear folk chant you do not hiv to lose your accent." When he taught English in Spain he said that the Orcadian accent helped with the pronunciation. After a brief spell abroad SM-M37 returned to work in Orkney as export manager of a seafood company.

In his work with the seafood company SM-M37 had to deal with the foreign trade and travelled to the USA and Europe in connection with business. For two years he spent some time helping out at youth camp in America and noted the positive reaction towards people with Scottish accents. At certain times, on his travels, people thought that he was either Welsh or Irish.

In the summer of 1980 KW-M44 got some work on an archaeological dig at the Broch of Howe in Stromness. This lasted for 6 months after which he was employed on post- excavation work. He says he became "an archaeologist by inclination" as he had no formal training for the profession. KW-M44 joined the Orkney Museum in 1988 as a relief custodian. "That wis over 18 years ago an I am still here as

Exhibitions Officer.” He has written or edited several books on the early history of Orkney with a special interest in the Viking period.

When asked about use of dialect in his work KW-M44 said that he might try to make allowances and modify for people who might not understand the Orcadian way of speaking, “ I takk folk as I find them I mak no distinction between a peer o the realm and a doon and oot on the street... as long as you makk yirsel understood as I wis browt up tae hiv a healthy respect for folk.” He then remarked in a jocular fashion that “ code switching wid be changin’ pillows whar I cam fae!” (“cods” being an Orkney word for pillows) KW-M44 did admit that he would rarely have changed when he was younger and if he was not understood then people would have to ask him to repeat what he had said.

One of the activities for which KW-M44 is well known is his storytelling abilities. He has been in a number of countries: “I hiv done storytelling fae Sweden to Newfoundland.” He said that he did not compromise much and, in some Scandinavian countries, he possibly uses more dialect as a lot of people enjoy it. “ The wan dialect word that is used the whole time is peedie...it just slips in tae the conversation... it is so ingrained.” KW-M44 felt that his accent gets broader when he is away as “ I think that it’s a way tae assert yir identity – whether its in Britain or abroad.”

On leaving school in 1969, HM-M57 went to work at the Orkney Auction Mart where he has been ever since. This has possibly influenced the way he has spoken as he has become a familiar face as auctioneer and as manager for a number of years. At the mart he has used dialect at all times. “ When you are in conversation wae all the

farmers and a lot o the public you just speak as you normally do ... and that's it
take it or leave it..."

HM-M57 remarked on the differences in terminologies within the farming fraternity and how some of the older farmers along with farmers from the islands would describe the cattle in different words. One example was steers (male beasts) and heifers (females) HM-M57 said, " I never called a steer by this name, it wid always hiv been a stot tae me and females wid be called quoyos by some of the owlder men"

Although she grew up on the farm WY-F88 wanted to go to Kirkwall when she left the school. She went to work in a jeweller's shop and also worked as a housemaid. "I didno change me spaking much and I hiv spoken dialect aal me life" As her mother was failing in health she had to go back to the island to help out at the farm. " It was all local folk at the time and noo there wans comin tae Westray all the time.

WY-F88 said that she never really changed her way of speaking: "I dinna want tae alter and I just canno chant!" She was disappointed that the old words were not used any more. " They will disappear becis nobody understands them..... I hardly use a lot o them and nothing is like it wunt tae be." WY-F88 said that she had seen many changes in her 88 years in Westray. "Nobody waakin tae the skule and all the farmin is done wae big tractors." She also spoke of the community life and how there was more social interaction when she was in her youth. " Noo it is the TV and computers bit I can mind when fokk visited the whole time and you jist yarned ye ken ... John o Rusland cam ower wance a week and wae saa the neebors every day."

When left the school KW-M70 went to work as a baker which was his trade until he retired. He worked with local people so spoke dialect for most of his life....." there wis no need to use English words as most folk wid understand the dialect." KW –M70 spoke about the changes in his home island of Eday: " When I left there there wis 308 of a population and noo it is about 120. There can only be about 30 natives and, if you go the school, there its just like a school in England."

6.3 Community life and social activites

On the question of the media SN-F21 thought that the television would have a bigger influence on the younger generation as they watch more American programmes. She admitted to being affected when she was in her childhood and also mentioned the effects of Radio 1 where disc jockeys would use a variety of accents.

Looking at the use of dialect when sending text messages by the mobile telephone, SN-F21 said, "I probably use more Orcadian as I find it easiersome o the words are shorter and other folk can follow you better."

When asked about any other influences on her use of language, WY-F19 mentioned the television as it did affect some of the words in her vocabulary. Also important was her peers: " One of me best friends is fae England so I hiv tae tae change a peedie bit. She noo speaks a bit o dialect as weel she is in Kirkwall wae us so tries to speak like us."

WY-F19 said that she had a number if friends who had not been born in Westray and she would probably have known them for most of her life. She indicated that she

would probably choose whether or not to speak dialect depending on the situation. If she was doing a presentation at school she would most likely use SSE but dialect would be spoken to “friends fae Westray.”

WY-F19 then made a few general remarks on the way in which people react to the use of dialect “Dialect can makk you think that you are special or that you are an idiot that is jist backwards at usin’ words..... There is no sense noo-adays “ Some visitors to Orkney might never have heard dialect before and might be perplexed, confused and even bemused at someone who pronounces words in an unfamiliar way. He said that one of the negative aspects of using the vernacular was that people might assume that you were not educated and that you had led a sheltered life: “ Folk hae this attitude that it is a backward wey o workin’ and think that you are been oot amang fukk” He mentioned that it can be an uncomfortable feeling when people appear to be viewing one as if they are inadequate and somewhat peculiar because of the way they talk.

WY-F19 said that he would hope that Orcadians would not ridicule their own people and that they should be able to adapt because of their own parents and grandparents. The problem might lie in the need to assimilate with new people within the community. “ The pressure o different fukk bein here ... I winder if folk can get an impression of ither folk Pressure tae be the sam as your peers?”

BY-F41 thought that the main influence on the use of dialect in Orkney had probably been the television: “probably TV ... but I wid say incomers as weel. As far as the TV is concerned, it does influence you when you are younger..... When I wis peedie you did not hiv all this American and Australian programmes ... noo me bairns (ages 10, 6

and 4) can speak a lot o words fae those places!” She is delighted that her 10 year old son speaks a lot of dialect words “ I am chuffed aboot that and the next boy, he speaks a bit o Orcadian too.”

BY-F41 then mentioned SM-M37 – the Orcadian who appeared on a Channel 4 reality TV show – and the effect he seemed to have on publicising the islands and the language. “ SM-M37 showed that folk could understand the Orkney dialect In fact they never thowt aboot it..... I am sure it hid an effect on the recognition of the dialect in the islands.”

In consideration of the use of dialect in entertainment and its prestige value, BY-F41 was supportive of dialect when used to amuse and audience: “Great – if it’s an Orkney thing the Orkney dialect should be used On the wireless it is good to hear folk spaekin and usin’ dialect No trying to change the wey that they speak.” She was less certain of the prestige value and suggested that dialect might not relax folk in the same way as the use of SSE.

On more general issues concerning the dialect SM-M37 had some fairly forthright views on the way it is used and the influences on the way people speak in Orkney. Although using dialect in text messaging may be amusing and in some cases more effective, SM-M37 took the view that it was “ one of the nails in the coffin for dialect and a vile culprit in the whole thing grammar not used properly along with some disintegration of the spelling and English.” He also criticised the use of Americanisms with special mention of the word “like”. He saw this as a bad thing for language and “it is jist laziness really.”

SM-M37 seemed to enjoy the use of dialect in entertainment and said, “I think that we should have more o it.” He mentioned the stories in *Stenwick Days* (see Lamb, Section 3.3) and said that he delivered a best man’s speech – for his brother - in dialect verse. The cartoon strip called *The Giddy Limit* (in The Orcadian newspaper) was also seen as amusing and entertaining. SM-M37 sounded a cautionary note: “it is all evolving and it’s a sad thing if its diluted..... me main concern is this dilution..... I don’t speak Orcadian every day but folk still ken whar I come fae.”

KW-M44 thought that the main influence on the use of dialect in Orkney has been the media. “I think that it’s the media becis me bairns don’t speak like I do ... it a kinda wattired doon Orcadian. Both bairns (17 year old son and 14 year old daughter) wir browt up wae Orcadian accents but thir seems to hiv been erosion through TV an the mass mediacertainly some of the words they use wid be more at home in America.”

On the subject of the use of dialect in the media – both national and local KW-M44 was supportive of the increasing use of local and provincial language as an alternative to Received Pronunciation. “ I am aal for it ... thir nothing more sterile than BBC English and if it is true that an Orcadian wis dropped fae STV becis on his accent then I find that ignorant and incredible..... Wae are not wan country and wan people wae are a myriad tribe o folk Comin fae different backgrounds and being denied your regional accent is offensive.”

HM-M57 felt the changes in farming might have a detrimental effect on the language as well. “ It might destroy wir dialect as weel as a lot of the strong dialect speakers are

in the agricultural section so if there is no so many in that there will no be some many folk speakin dialect.”

As his work has taken HM-M57 around all the parishes and islands, he has a keen ear for the variations and could recognise people from the various islands such as Westray and Sanday as well as people from Birsay and South Ronaldsay. It was fairly easy for him to identify farmers on the telephone simply by listening to their different speech patterns. HM57 also mentioned the ways in which the pronunciation of house names would differ within a small radius in the parish of Holm where he has lived for the past 30 years. He gave as example the farm of Howquoy which is pronounced as “Hucquee” and yet, on the other side of his farm there was a farm with a similar ending was pronounced as “Withaquoy”. The farm of Westerbister was known, by all the parishioners, as “Waster”

During interactions with people in Kirkwall HM-M57 said that he would use dialect when he could: “I maybe tend tae change a bit when I am spaekin tae the doctor or minister and eens like that, as you are frightened that they might no understand and no becis o their position in the community.”

KW-M70 still thought about the dialect and the way of life he enjoyed in Eday but he also acknowledged the progress in communications and power supplies along with the transformation of farming practices. “First I mind all the fairmwork wis done by horses and folk cut peat for their fires... all that his gone noo.”

6.4 The effects of tourism and migration to Orkney

When asked about the benefits of tourism and migration to Orkney SM-M37 said that

“ I am on two minds on that becis on the wan side its really good for Orkney and brings in a lot o money but than, on a big liner day, it can be hell on earth at a place like Skara Brae.” She suggested that tourists are important and they sometimes want to move to Orkney but “ it makks Orcadians change.” The migrants from “sooth” have been a major influence on the way of life in Orkney and have discouraged many local people from speaking their dialect as they tend to adapt to suit the new people in the parish. “ Folk that move up here should learn to speak the wey wae do as people that come here speak the wey they do so why should wae change ?”

When asked what he thought had been the greatest influence on the use of dialect in Orkney, KW-M28 thought that it might be the attitudes of the people and also the migration of people to Orkney. “Weel there are different attitudes besides whit used tae be.. it is maybe no the in thing tae be usin words yir grandparents used Bit there is such a change wae folk comin up here tae bide They kinda takk new things wi them. I think fokk are forced tae change and there been a lot o changes anyway.” He also mentioned the new technological age with many households having a computer and the use of at least one mobile phone. “ The TV and all that things... I think fokk would like to model themselves on some of the soaps as weel.”

With regard to the incomers or effects of migration to Orkney, BY-F41 said, “ I think that it has made a difference a lot o folk has moved in tae me oldest boy’s class and he can imitate them quite weel.” When she meets incomers at work or speaks to

non-Orcadians on the telephone, “ I sometimes feel mesel spaekin proper just so as they can understand whit I am sayin’.”

KW-M44 said that the incomers had also been a strong effect as “there is an aafil lot o folk movin up here fae England..... Fair enough... they hiv tae live somewhar... bit I think that when you get a lot o incomers wae young families in the classroom then the Orcadian bairns are bound tae be influenced by them.” He added “Folk are movin around all over the place and dialect might be looked on as bein’ owld fashioned so there is a prestige element in it it used to be if you were Orcadian you wir a country bumpkin.”

When asked what he thought had been the biggest influence on the use of dialect in Orkney, HM-M57 commented: “I think the TV without a doubt.... It seems tae hiv had a big effect especially among the young folk.” He also mentioned the migrants to Orkney and said “A lot of folk hiv come tae Orkney..... we hiv hain two goes at it wae hid a big influx efter the war and of coorse this last while (over the last 30 years or so) even in the farming community in the last 20 years wae hiv hid an aafil lot of folk come in ... as weel as ones in some o the professional jobs.”

KW-M70 mentioned the migrants and the effects on the island of Eday“ The folk comin in tae the island is also important but I can mind a family comin in tae Eday when I wis a boythey hid four bairns and in no time at all they wir just spaekin like the rest o us.” The young people adopted the local tongue and spoke the dialect. KW-M70 said that the situation was different at present with a greater percentage of incomers along with different attitudes to when it was appropriate to use dialect.

6.5 The future of dialect and values of the vernacular

Towards the conclusion of each interview, the future of Orkney was discussed where possible changes in the population might alter the way of life. SN-F21 said “I will bide in Orkney I think.... as for the dialect aspect I can see it disappearin as a lot o companies have global business so Orcadian can’t really be used.... then it might die oot.” She did have some opinions on how the problem of dialect death might be alleviated: “If you don’t change ...it will keep goin’ and if you keep using it among Orcadians then it might survive. If I have a family they will be brought up to speak Orcadian but then it is up to them to use it.” SN-F21 concluded by stating that she would speak in the dialect at every available opportunity.

When asked about the meaning of language and dialect, WY-F19 said that it was part of the heritage and that it should be kept in use because “ it’s whit wae wir browt up with.” She commented that it might be difficult to ensure that dialect remains as the main choice of speech due to the population changes and “there is a lot more fokk in the island that’s no fae Westray.” If she qualifies as a teacher she would like to return to the island and remain part of the community.

KW-M28 did not think that he would change much as there would be no apparent need for him to alter his way of speaking. “When I worked for Historic Scotland I hid tae change becis I wir dealing wae folk fae all ower the world bit noo I dinna need tae worry and I do not think that I will alter.... Accent is difficult especially when you hiv used it for a while..... I don’t think that I will change noo.” Although a number of people would think that dialect was outmoded KW-M28 said that the dialect was important to him.

At the conclusion of the interview KW-M28 expressed the hope that dialect would continue in some form and that it was selling point of the islands. He realised that demographic movement and the changing attitudes of different generations had led to the dilution of the dialect but he hoped that there would always be an interest in the dialect: “ I dae hope that there will always be a place for Orkney dialect and culture and it will be a shame if it is pressurised oot o Orcadians..... Let us hope that they always retain words and knowledge o words.” He concluded, “There is a most fairfull variation throughout Orkney but maybe the dialect will survive in the isles..... young folk in Westray hiv a healthy attitude tae it..... they hiv a pride in it and that is whit is needed.”

Looking towards the future, BY-F41 highlighted the need to encourage the young people to use the language of their locality: “ Folk that’s hivin bairns... if they use it the bairns will pick it up ... bairns will speak differently Me bairns speak dialect becis they hiv haird me yabblin’ on the whole time.” She concluded the interview by expressing her displeasure of the use of SSE as an affectation: “ Nothing annoys me more than folk comin on the wireless and chantan’ Dialect needs to be encouraged in the school and bairns should write poetry in it it is part o wir life.”

When asked what the dialect meant to him KW-M44 was predictably open and forthright on the subject: “ Weel its me mither tongue and I canna really speak anything else... it is certainly bein eroded bit I don’t ken whit you can do aboot it.” He spoke of the suggestion that dialect might be taught in school but commented that this would be somewhat difficult to achieve: “ You can no more teach dialect than you can teach common sense or mither wit as wae call it in Orkney..... and

anyway.... whit dialect wid you teach as there are so many variations Would you end up wae a kind o standardised BBC Orcadian?” KW-M44 concluded that young people should not be discouraged from using the dialect and it could be used freely in educational establishments: “ Orkney teachers should speak their own dialect ... don’t repress it and see hoo it goes..... but there is no easy answer and language always changes as weel as the wordsso there is no easy answer.”

On the future of life in Orkney, HM-M57 was somewhat pessimistic or concerned that industries such as agriculture would suffer. “ I am kinda frightened for the future of agriculture I think that it will struggle as it’s a lonely life and there is jist no enough profit for the sons and dowters tae stay home and work.” He indicated that there was about 1300 farms in Orkney when he started to work at the local cattle market in 1969 and at the time of interview (April 2006) there was only 650. The labour force has dropped and farmers have become more mechanised.

When asked what dialect meant to him, HM-M57 said that he had never thought of it as a symbol of identity but maybe it did fulfil this role. “I just tend tae to use the words I hiv always used and no changed for anybody but some folk might query whit you mean when you use owlder words.” He indicated that he would be unlikely to be moved to change his way of speaking: “No, I do not think that I will ... weel I hope no anyway I see no need tae change as I hiv spoken dialect all me life and there no point in doin anything else noo.”

WY-F88 realised that things would change but said there was less house visiting and that the incomers had made a difference to the island. The local folk had to change

their use of dialect and attitudes towards the old words had also altered with the young people going to the school in Kirkwall and not returning to the island. When asked about the future of the island she was pessimistic, “ I dinna think that the incomers mix all that much and there are no so many farm workers needed..... and as for the dialect..... a lot of the words will no be understood so it will change as weel.”

When asked about the future of Orkney KW-M70 thought that there would be some changes “Am aafil faird that the dialect will get more and more diluted and the culture will change as in Orkney afore you kent everybody in the parish You kent your neebors and their families..... and noo its just a collection of strangersam no doon cryin them for their good folk among them... but it his definitely changed wir culture. ” KW-M70 realised that change was inevitable but that the way of life in Orkney along with the cultural traditions would be overtaken by the demographic movement and the differences in attitudes and values.

KW-M70 thought that the greatest influence on the use of dialect would be the media as the young people watch more television and listen to a wide range of programmes on the radio.

The experiences of SM-M37 will help in the understanding of the use of dialect on the national media and how this should assist with the appreciation of a vernacular tongue from the Northern Isles.

SM-M37 appeared on the Channel 4 TV show in the summer of 2004 and eventually emerged as the winner. In his interview he revealed insights into one facet of Orcadian dialect that has not been covered previously: the use of the Orkney dialect on national television.

When he applied for the programme SM-M37 said that he “pit it in for a bit o fun” Two months later an invitation to an audition followed and he had to make a video of his life in Orkney. “Pretty droll the things folk will do – I did some shots at Yesnaby wae the sunset on the 31st December!” His auditions were successful and he was invited to appear on the programme.

“I think that it wis good that we hid a broad selection o dialects on the programme but the others wir fascinated wae Orkney as few o them had ever encountered an Orkney person afore.” SM-M37 indicated that the other participants did not seem to have many problems with his way of speaking and mentioned one occasion when he said to a female fellow contestant from London, “Shaa me that cloot” (please hand me that dishcloth) and she understood. He was standing at the sink so the context might have assisted in the way she responded!

In the location of the programme, SM-M37 said that “if you are ordinary and straightforward and no trying tae be something you are no then folk recognise that I wis happy stickin tae me roots and just being me.” He believes that it was this ability to be natural that appealed to the viewers. SM-M37 also felt that his use of dialect was an effective tool in the process of gathering support although he did not have any preconceived plan to build up any sort of public persona.

When asked about the ways that becoming winner of a television show had changed his life, SM-M37 said that firstly, when he telephones anybody they tend to recognise the Orcadian accent and then ask, “is that (name) ?” He also thought that one of the positive elements to emerge was that many people will now identify the accent and the dialect through watching the programme.

6.6 Summary of Chapter Six

Informants believed that migrants had influenced the use of dialect in Orkney and that migratory movements had changed the way dialect speakers perceived their local tongue. They acknowledged external influences such as television and the progress with internet communication.

Following those perceptions, informants related changes in dialect to the wider social and cultural aspects of life in Orkney. Whether in discourse with non-dialect speakers or in speech events such as public meetings, people were reluctant to employ dialect in some situations as they felt that its use might be prejudicial to the outcome of the communication. The prestige value of dialect was also highlighted with informants suggesting that a stigma existed in some situations when dialect was seen as less effective than standard form of English.

Informants were confident in their use of dialect with some individuals suggesting that there was no compulsion to accommodate other speakers as migrants rarely changed their lects when they moved to Orkney. Dialect played an important role in the lives of the informants and indicated that local speakers should have confidence in

using it; people should take pride in its value and richness; dialect should be encouraged within educational establishments and also used at public events.

Movement of people within Orkney and greater mobility between the islands and outwith Orkney, was seen as part of an ongoing process of development and change. One of the key features emerging from the interviews, however, was the recognition that dialect was a strong element in the social and cultural life of the islands. Changes were seen as inevitable but the need to retain the vernacular was perceived as paramount in upholding the unique way of life in Orkney.

This chapter has revealed some comprehensive insights into the multiplicity of influences on the way people use dialect and has also offered perspectives from a range of age groups and backgrounds. The technique of using a loose structure for the interview with subject headings allowing the interviewee to develop their own themes seemed to provide a wealth of topics related to the subject of language and the social and cultural issues involved in decisions on how to use dialect in everyday life.

SN-F21 and WY-F19 made up the youngest age group 16 -24. Although they had similar rural backgrounds they also had different life experiences. WY-F19 was born on the island of Westray with SN-F21 being a resident of Stenness on the Orkney Mainland. One had studied at the island school and Kirkwall Grammar School while the other attended the Stromness Academy then Orkney College. It was interesting to note that SN-F21 said that she had been strongly influenced by her parents to speak the dialect while WY-F19 seemed to have the freedom to choose how she spoke. Both girls realised the influence of migrants and the way that this impacted on the

community. The need to change was mentioned in connection with work and how communication could be impaired by the lack of understanding of the local tongue.

The three members of the next age group 25 – 44 had very contrasting lives along with a variety of personal experiences ranging from working with the farming fraternity to appearing on national television for a period of nine weeks. BY-F41, KW-M28 and SM-M37 acknowledged the influence of their families which formed the basis of the way they continued to use the dialect. All mentioned their pride in the local way of speaking and their ability to code-switch when appropriate. In this group there was greater realisation that peer pressure could be exerted in order to change. Whether this was to avoid ridicule or to show respect is a matter of conjecture. KW-M28 was very articulate in his illumination of varied examples of the vernacular while SM-M37 suggested that the accent and dialect were useful tools and people seemed to be drawn by the sound and the lilt of the Orcadian tongue. Both SNS02 and SM-M37 thought that the use of dialect as a form of entertainment was a positive feature while KW-M28 felt that dialect was a selling point for Orkney.

The next age group, 45 to 64 was represented by two people who were born on the Mainland of Orkney and had strong links with the people of Orkney through their work. HM-M57 had spent all his working life serving the farming fraternity while KW-M44 had concentrated on the heritage and culture through working in the Museum service. One of the key features of both those men was their strong urge to use dialect when it was possible and they appeared to have the confidence to conduct most of their interactions in their native tongue. They mentioned the changes that had

taken place in Orkney and the way in which attitudes might have been shaped by the influx of migrants and the power of the media.

WY-F88 and KW-M70, who were members of the 65 + age group, had similar family backgrounds. WY-F88 was born on a farm in Westray and KW-M70 on a small croft on the island of Eday. Their lives were in stark contrast from their teenage years although WY-F88 did spend some time at work in Kirkwall, she spent most of her life on the island of her birth. KW-M70, on the other hand, left Eday to attend school in Kirkwall and never returned. One of the striking points of both those people was that they always maintained the language of their youth. They always used dialect when speaking to people from Orkney although KW-M70 admitted having to change in certain situations in the interests of clarity and avoidance of humiliation. WY-F88 and KW-M70 were able to reminisce about their younger days and commented on the ways in which life on the islands had changed in terms of population and community life. They both said that change was inevitable and that dialect would suffer as result of those events.

Within the interviews with the 9 people across 4 age groups, a number of theoretical perspectives became apparent. Holmes mentioned stereotypes and how rural people may be labelled because of their dialect use. This was remarked upon by BY-F41 who spoke about “yokels fae Holm” and by KW-M28 who indicated that people might be called yokels if they spoke a lot of dialect. Almost all the interviewees mentioned the possibility of ridicule and humiliation – this was highlighted by Trudgill in his work (2000).

Relationships within localities were considered by Montgomery (2002) and, during the interviews, KW-M28, HM-M57, KW-M70 and KW-M44 all mentioned how they had interacted with their communities through judicious use of the Orkney dialect.

The choice of language and the options to use dialect was a feature throughout the interviews and the three approaches – sociological, anthropological and factors related to social psychology – were instrumental in the explanation of why people chose to speak SSE as an alternative to dialect. The question of domains was featured when KW-M28 and KW-M70 spoke of interactions with professional people while some anthropological features could be found in the points raised by HM-M57 in connection with the farming community. It was possible for him to identify people on the telephone by their speech patterns. Speech accommodation theories help to describe the ways in which BY-F21 and WY-F19 communicated with their peers and in the views that WY-F88 held about the migrant community in Westray.

Various other perspectives from research proved useful in understanding the situation in Orkney. One particularly fruitful approach was social network analysis, such as that undertaken by the Milroys (2003). The communities within the islands and parishes along with the work situations in connection with farming activities provided a number of networks where people spoke differently. Whether or not those networks were part of the reason for the continuance of different variations will be considered in the final chapter. Other research by Dorian (1978, 1980) which looked at variants of the Gaelic language, could be linked with variations of the Orcadian dialect within the same island such as Westray. Finally, Kerswill (1993, 2006) considered the increase in geographical mobility and the social changes in recent years and how this

has affected the way people speak through pronunciation and attitudes towards its use. It is possible to draw parallels between his work and the changes which have taken place in Orkney.

In conclusion the interviews brought a number of salient points for discussion and those will form a part of the overall conclusion once the fieldwork in other areas has been discussed. The way in which the interviewees or the individuals were able to express their views and share their experiences played a significant part in the thesis and in the understanding of the social and cultural features that have influenced the use of dialect in Orkney.

Chapter Seven

The survey findings related to attitudes and perceptions

The main purpose of the attitude questionnaire was to ascertain the attitudes towards the use of dialect in Orkney. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was designed to elicit responses on a number of topics including:

- 1 Use of dialect in everyday life and activity
- 2 The frequency of code-switching
- 3 The use of the vernacular on Radio Orkney and the national media
- 4 Recognition of variations throughout Orkney
- 5 The prestige value of dialect compared to Scottish Standard English
- 6 The amount of dialect spoken to people from a variety of occupations
- 7 Factors that have had the greatest influence on the use of dialect in Orkney

Interviews with informants were classified into four age groups:

16 -24	25 – 44	45 – 64	65 and over
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The selection process was random with people chosen from a variety of locations. Contacts in these locations provided advice on potential informants in relation to occupational backgrounds and age groups. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face although three took place over the telephone and two were completed by mail. The original target of 100 interviews was reached. This provided a reasonable sample size and facilitated an accurate analysis of the data collected. Informants were given the opportunity to comment on aspects of dialect use and this led to some

enlightening and stimulating discussion. A number of quotations appear at appropriate places throughout this chapter of the thesis.

Table 7.1 The breakdown of age groups

Age Group	Number of informants
16-24	20
25-44	30
45-64	30
65 and over	20
Total	100

Table 7.2 The breakdown on the entire sample in terms of their occupations, education and qualifications.

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+over
Professional		13	10	
Administration	3	7	4	
Skilled Trades	2		3	1
Semi-skilled			5	1
Sales/Customer service	2	8	2	
Manual workers	2	1	4	
Process workers		1	1	1
Students	11			
Retired			1	17
	20	30	30	20

Table 7.3 The level of education achieved by the informants

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+over
School	5	6	14	16
Further Education	3	3	2	
College	9	7	8	1
University	3	14	6	3
	20	30	30	20

Table 7.4 The highest educational attainment achieved by informants

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+over
No Certificate	1	3	7	13
School Certificate	5	5	8	1
College Award	11	8	10	3
Degree	3	14	5	3
	20	30	30	20

7.1 Greatest influences on the use of dialect

One of the key questions to be asked in the questionnaire was " what do you think has had the greatest influence on the use of dialect in Orkney?" Informants were asked to rate the list of four possible factors in order of preference:

- changing attitudes towards the use of dialect
- the influx of incomers to Orkney over the past 30 – 40 years
- the influence of the media
- mobility of people between the islands and outwith Orkney

The possible influences were based on the hypotheses that incomers had been influential in affecting the way that people use dialect; that attitudes towards dialect have been shaped by the changing population and increased mobility of people has led to variations within different areas throughout the islands.

Table 7.5 The overall totals for first choices

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Totals
Changing attitudes	4 (20%)	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	3 (15%)	12 (12%)
Influx of incomers	10(50%)	15(50%)	17 (57%)	8 (40%)	50 (50%)
Influence of the media	4 (20%)	9 (30%)	6 (20%)	6 (30%)	25 (25%)
Mobility	2 (10%)	4 (13%)	4 (13%)	3 (15%)	13 (13%)

From the above table it will be observed that 50% of the informants gave the influx of the incomers as their first choice while 25% thought that media was the main influence. For the remaining options - changing attitudes and mobility – the scores were 12% and 13%. At the outset those figures provide evidence that the influx of the incomers is considered to be the most significant factor on the use of dialect. It is not an overwhelming result however as only half of the people interviewed held this view.

In the past 50 years the movement of people has increased between the islands and between Orkney and other parts of the United Kingdom. Better transport links and more disposable income have encouraged the local people to be more mobile. As people move to new areas they bring with them with them a variety of dialects and it is possible that this might have influenced the way Orcadians think about their own

dialect. Thirteen people thought that this movement of people was the greatest influence on the use of dialect in the county.

Attitudes may vary for a number of reasons including links to prestige and new trends in the modern society. The values attached to Standard English and its status has changed over time. The changing attitudes accounted for 12% of the total responses.

In the following paragraphs the four age groups will be examined in more detail with all responses shown in tabular form. From these figures it is possible to identify some similarities and contrasts. The comments made by individuals help to reveal some of the reasoning behind the responses.

This question follows the hypotheses very closely so the responses play a crucial role in the understanding of the subject of the thesis. The overall responses do provide a useful guide to the attitudes of a small selection of the local population of Orkney. It is important to look at the age groups as this will cover all responses and choices.

Table 7.6 Responses for age group 16-24

	1 st choice	2 nd choice	3 rd choice	4 th choice	Totals
Changing attitudes	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	10 (50%)	20
Influx of incomers	10 (50%)	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	20
Influence of the media	4 (20%)	7 (35%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)	20
Mobility	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	11 (55%)	3 (15%)	20

Table 7.6 shows that 10 informants in the 16 -24 age group believe that incomers are the greatest influence on the use of dialect in Orkney. This represents 50% of the total sample. Opinions were balanced on the media and changing attitudes with 4 responses to those options. As their second choice 7 people thought that the influence of the media was important with 6 people saying incomers – once again attitudes were considered a low priority.

As their third choice 11 people – more than half the total – thought that mobility had a greater impact than any of the other options. It is possible to suggest that the reason for this line of thinking might be related to the fact that opportunities for travel have developed in the last 15 – 20 years so this age group have spent their formative years in a time when mobility was expanding. Changing attitudes did not feature highly in this group with 10 people placing this as their fourth choice.

It is difficult to pinpoint any trend in connection with this age group and their attitude towards greatest influences on the use of dialect. Some of their views reflect those of their peers – 50% of the group saying that incomers were the main influence corresponds with the overall results displaying the same figure.(see Table 7.5)

Some young people may be influenced by location rather than external influences such as the media and mobility. If they have been exposed to a number of young people from migrant families in Sanday, for example, then this might have shaped their attitudes to a great extent. At Orkney College there is a greater variety of dialect and language variations so those students may develop contrasting views to their contemporaries from the outer islands.

On the issue of mobility and the amount of travel between Orkney and other parts of the United Kingdom, one young person commented

“ mobility does not having lasting changes on dialect it comes back to you

.....this is not conscious – it just happens.”

KW-F23

This respondent was referring to her time at university as an art student and on the way she spoke on her return to Orkney to live and work.

Another young person – a student at university in Wales – was aware of the movement of people and the way it influences use of dialect:

“ a lot of folk are moving around now and this must have an effect on the way that people speak...”

SW-F22

With regard to the effect of in-migration some of the comments were well considered and looked at possible scenarios of the future:

“ I think that dialect might disappear as there is a lot o’ folk moving up to Orkney and I don’t think that it will be needed...we will become multi-cultural just like the rest of Britain..”

SM-M19

This was an interesting perspective as SM-M19 not only acknowledged the influence of the people moving up to Orkney, he suggested that there will be no need to use dialect. (note this is mentioned in another context with Barnes’ (1989) comment on the cessation of Orkney Norn and no necessity for its use in Orkney – see Chapter 3.)

Another student from Stenness said:

“ I feel that TV has had a strong influence on the use of dialect and also the incomers to Orkney...but especially the teachers in schools in Orkney. If the teachers were Orcadian then children would talk differently with more use of dialect” SN-F19

In this quotation SN-F19 mentions the media and the migrants and introduces the question of education to the subject. She thinks that more Orcadian born teachers would encourage greater use of dialect by young people. As will be noted in following sections other informants from different age groups will mention the delivery of teaching and academic experience.

Table 7.7 Responses for age group 25-44

	1 st choice	2 nd choice	3 rd choice	4 th choice	Totals
Changing attitudes	2 (6%)	7 (23%)	15 (50%)	6 (20%)	30
Influx of incomers	15 (50%)	9 (30%)	2 (7%)	4 (14%)	30
Influence of the media	9 (30%)	7 (23%)	7 (23%)	7 (23%)	30
Mobility	4 (14%)	7 (23%)	6 (20%)	13 (43%)	30

As with the previous age group 50% of the 25 - 44 age group believe that incomers have had the most influence on the use of dialect. About 30% of the total, however, said that the media were a significant factor. Changing attitudes were not seen as of great significance but 4 people did say that mobility was their first choice.

With regard to second choices one point emerges from the figures in the table. There is a remarkable conformity of numbers with 7 people each saying attitudes, media and

mobility. This group did not regard mobility as a high priority with 13 people – nearly 48% - placing it as their fourth choice.

Once again, the incomers factor was clearly the choice with half of the informants. Although this is significant, the media must not be ignored. This sample included people from a variety of occupations: administrative and professional backgrounds, salespersons along with manual workers and plant operators. It could be postulated that their opinions are shaped by their employment. It appears that people in the professions may be more likely to think that media is a strong influence while manual workers and sales people might see incomers as being the major force in the dilution of the dialect.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter some comments are very helpful and add another dimension to the short responses given to the questions posed in the questionnaire. The comments below cover a number of pertinent areas of concern.

“ young folk speak more English than we do bit they also watch more TV so I think this is one of the reasons.....”

SN-F39

“ .. strong influence of TV – especially American programmes – and a lack of exposure to community life ... I think that this is affecting the way that dialect is spoken by a lot of the younger folk..”

KW-M39

Both the above informants mentioned the media and its significant effect on the way that young people use dialect. It is interesting to note that both those informants work

in the voluntary sector so have some experience of people from a wide spectrum of the community. In the course of their work they meet with people from different age groups and with local people as well as the migrant population.

The subject of schools and education in relation to the use of dialect appeared at regular intervals throughout this age group. Typical comments were:

“ bairns are encouraged to speak more English in the school...” SN-F39

“should be more dialect used in class wherever possible...” KW-F28

“ there is a lot of different accents in the classroom nowadays.....” SR-F28

A number of members of this group were parents of teenage children so the influences of family were undoubtedly manifested in the responses given to the question of the greatest influence on the use of dialect. One parent who is also a teacher said :

“.... I feel that young people from Orkney are mostly proud of their identity and heritage but want to belong in the ever-shrinking world and so use Scottish Standard English to confirm this.....” HM-F42

Table 7.8 Responses for age group 45-64

	1 st choice	2 nd choice	3 rd choice	4 th choice	Totals
Changing attitudes	3 (10%)	8 (27%)	7 (23%)	12 (40%)	30
Influx of incomers	17 (56%)	6 (20%)	2 (6%)	5 (16%)	30
Influence of the media	6 (20%)	10 (33%)	13 (44%)	1 (4%)	30
Mobility	4 (14%)	6 (20%)	8 (27%)	12 (40%)	30

This group with birthdates from 1940 – 1961 gave clear responses to their first choice with 17 people – 54% of the total sample – opting for incomers. Another 6 people said that the media was their preferred option leaving only 7 people split between attitudes and mobility. As a second choice 6 informants said incomers and 10 chose the influence of the media.

On the third and fourth choices responses were mixed but it was clear that mobility and changing attitudes did not rate highly in their estimation. Perhaps this age group was more opinionated and more confident in expressing their views than the previous age groups. It also is possible to speculate that they have experienced the changes at a personal level. The changes in the aftermath of World War II along with the advent of oil in Orkney, would have featured in the lives of this age group.

Some of the comments made by the 45 – 64 age group provide an insight into the attitudes of a group of influential people in the community – decision makers, successful farmers, museum curators, professionals and people with their own businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry.

“ At the school, where I work, I notice that most of the bairns are speaking proper – even though both of their parents are Orcadians” SY-F54

This comment was one of many – it highlights the influence of incomers in the schools and how some of the children fall into the “new” culture rather than maintaining that of their parents. Peer group pressure would appear to be the cause in this context as this was mentioned by a number of the informants. The school and the education system led to a number of points being raised on the general topic of influences on the use of dialect:

“ part of me job is to encourage the use of dialect in the Orkney schools It seems that this has almost been discouraged over the last 20-30 years.” SP-F48

“ More should have been done at the school to encourage the use of dialect but its was frowned upon ...” KW-M49

“ I hope that education authorities always encourage dialect and make people feel proud of their dialect” KW-F52

Place names – part of the Viking legacy – have also been put at risk according to some informants. The influence of the incomers might lead to a change in the re-naming of some places:

“ Sometimes the incomers try to change the place names and anglicise them – this is very irritating.” HM-M59

Acquisition of dialect by migrants was also mentioned – this informant went to schools in the sixties when the volume of migration was at a fairly low level.

“ When I was at primary school any child from outwith Orkney who came into class very quickly acquired an Orcadian accent – this no longer happens.” SN-F49

Many questions were raised or suggested as a result of the responses of this age group. Should more attention be paid to awareness of dialect in schools? Would this make any difference to the language adopted by the children and young people? Why do some people want to change the names of places with a long history? Why do the migrants appear to be reluctant to acquire some of the culture of their adopted homeland?

Table 7.9 Responses for age group 65 and over

	1 st choice	2 nd choice	3 rd choice	4 th choice	Totals
Changing attitudes	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	7 (35%)	7 (35%)	20
Influx of incomers	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	20
Influence of the media	6 (30%)	9 (45%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	20
Mobility	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)	10 (50%)	20

There is a greater diversity in this age group in relation to their first choices. Only 40% - or 8 people – thought that incomers were the greatest influence on the use of dialect with 6 informants choosing the media as their top rating. For second choices 9 people – almost half of the total in the 65 and over age group – selected the media with incomers providing 6 responses on this occasion.

Mobility appears to be the least important according to 10 members of this group.

Changing attitudes are not thought to exert much influence on the way people speak – maybe the respondents view this as inevitable and part of the process of movement of population.

The 65 and over age group have experienced many changes over the years. Some of the people interviewed lived through the turmoil of the Second World War. They remember the influx of service personnel and the changes this brought to a small island community. Younger members of the group could remember the early days of the oil exploration along with the beginning of the modern drift of people to Orkney in search of work and a different quality of life.

Drawing on their life experience this group freely offered opinions and viewpoints on the subject of incomers and language. They seemed to have the confidence to voice their opinions without any reticence or fear of ridicule from others. One of the aspects mentioned was speech accommodation – two contrasting examples follow:

“Orkney folk are keen to accommodate folk fae sooth ...”

KW-M70

“Folk that his moved in fae sooth need to learn the way that wae speak - aftir all they dinna change whit they say tae suit us.....”

KW-M68

A number of informants were situated on the islands .Sanday, Westray and Eday have all experienced substantial demographic movement over the last 30 years. One lady from Sanday (age 84) said this:

“Wae hiv so many incomers in the island and roond aboot the neighbourhood that I hiv tae wattir doon the dialect so as they can follow whit I am saying tae them..”

SY-F84

One comment from a retired veterinary surgeon who had travelled widely around the parishes in his career had some pragmatic views with regard to attitudes to dialect and the choices faced by the younger generation:

“ You canna force people – especially the young folk – to use the dialect. They will say things they way they choose. I am sure that I did the same when I wis oot the islands in me university days.”

HY-M68

Teaching and education also was raised during interview sessions with this age group. The co-relation between incomers and attitudes was apparent with a number of the group mentioning the provision of education – especially at primary level:

“ How can non-Orcadians teach dialect tae the bairns in a peedie school? On this island there are no many pupils so whit can we do?”

NR-M67

The 65 and over age group appeared to be somewhat more conciliatory in their approach to the question and were almost resigned to the fact that influences other than incomers were responsible for the way that dialect is used in Orkney. Media were regularly mentioned with comments such as “ no television when I wis young – we made our own entertainment”

KW-M83

This age group have seen many of the changes that have occurred in Orkney over the past 5 decades. Their approach appears to be less vocalised than other age groups with less apparent prejudice. It would appear that they almost accept the way that dialect use has changed and view the incomers as part of an inevitable process of history.

7.2 The use of dialect in the daily life of informants

This question was set to ascertain the frequency of the use of dialect in the daily life of the informants. The options were as follows:

In your daily life would you say that you use dialect: very frequently	VF
frequently	F
quite frequently	QF
not very frequent	NVF
not at all	NAA

Table 7.10 Overall results for the use of dialect in daily life

Very frequently	42
Frequently	36
Quite frequently	15
Not very frequently	7
Not at all	0

From the figures in the table above it will be observed that 42 people said that they used dialect very frequently with 36 saying frequently. This would suggest that about 80% of the total sample use dialect at regular times during their daily life. Even 15

informants use dialect quite frequently leaving only 7 people stating that they did not use dialect very frequently and no-one said that they never used dialect at all.

Looking at the breakdown of age groups the picture becomes clearer and indicates some interesting variations and contrast

Table 7.11 Use of dialect in daily life showing the responses of all age groups

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 +	Totals
Very frequently	3 (15%)	13 (44%)	14 (47%)	12 (60%)	42
Frequently	9 (45%)	9 (30%)	13 (43%)	5 (25%)	36
Quite frequently	5 (25%)	6 (20%)	2 (7%)	2 (10%)	15
Not very frequently	3 (15%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	1 (5%)	7
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0

Only 3 young people said that they use dialect very frequently while, in the 65+ age group 12 out of 20 people said that they used dialect very frequently. This is almost an expected response and, infact one might have expected even more people in the older age group. Looking at the other age groups almost half the total in each of the two groups said that they use dialect very frequently during the day.

In the frequent use of dialect option it will be noted that 9 people in the 16-24 age group said that they would use dialect much of the time. A total of 5 people from the 65 + age group said frequently with 13 people age 45-64 giving this response. Nine individuals in the 25-44 age group said that they would use dialect frequently.

Looking at the “quite frequently” option it will be noted that a total of 15 people chose this as an answer. In the 16-24 age group 5 young people gave this response and in the next group aged 25-44 only 6 people said quite frequently. Two people from each of the two older age groups thought that this was the applicable answer. In the not very frequently section the figures are fairly low with a total of 7 people divided between the groups. Three young people thought that they did not use dialect very often and only two of the next age group having this opinion. Only one person in the 45-64 and the 65+ age group gave this as their answer.

It is interesting to note that no person said that they never used dialect. What can be inferred from those results? The general synopsis would point to a high degree of use of dialect in daily life. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter nearly 80% of the total sample use dialect for much of the time. Although the comments sometimes heard such as “young folk are just speaking English these days” are common, the figures would suggest that more than 50% of this age group do regularly use dialect in their life.

In the 45-64 age group it appears that there is a high volume of reported dialect use with 27 out of 30 giving either of the “very frequently” or “frequently answers.” The over 65 group claim to be persistent users of dialect in their daily life.

7.3 Code-switching

Table 7.12 Responses from all age groups on the frequency of switching between dialect and Scottish Standard English (SSE)

	Totals	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 +
Very frequently	14	3 (15%)	6 (19%)	3 (10%)	2 (10%)
Frequently	21	5 (25%)	8 (27%)	4 (13%)	4 (20%)
Quite frequently	21	5 (25%)	8 (27%)	7 (23%)	1 (5%)
Not very frequently	43	7 (35%)	8 (27%)	16 (54%)	12 (60%)
Not at all	1	0	0	0	1 (5%)

One of the first observations is that 43 people from a total of 100 said that they did not switch very often. From the age group perspective the 45-64 and 65+ groups are more likely not to switch than the younger people. The 65 + age group report the least predilection to switch with more than half giving this as their answer. On the other hand, only 7 of the youngest group and 8 of the 25-44 group said that they did not switch very frequently. More than half of the 45-64 age group preferred not to switch to SSE very often.

In the first row of the table it will be noted that only 14 people said that they switch between dialect and SSE very frequently. This is divided between the four groups on a fairly equable basis. In the section on reasons for switching the background behind the figures should lead to understanding of this statistic.

The frequently and quite frequently categories raised a very uniform response with a total of 21 people in each category. In the 16-24 section 5 young people said fairly

frequently with another 5 quite frequently. This uniformity is mirrored in the next age group when 8 people from the 25-44 age group said fairly frequently and 8 people thought that quite frequently would be the appropriate response.

The older age groups have a fairly low response rate with 4 from each age group saying fairly frequently and only one 65+ person saying quite frequently. Just over 25% of the 45-64 age group thought that they switched frequently.

Only one person out of 100 people said that they never switched at all. This is almost unique in that all the other informants switched at some level, even though more than half of the people switched at regular levels. The person who never switched is highly tenacious or fiercely proud of his dialect and does not have a perceived need to code-switch.

Location could be one of the key factors in this section – switching might be related to whether or not the informant lives on one of the islands and is therefore likely to be living in a community composed of a number of incomers. Occupations also play a part in that some people need to switch on a daily basis in order to satisfy the needs and demands of their job.

7.4 Reasons for switching between dialect and SSE

Informants had the opportunity to give reasons for switching between the Orkney dialect and Scottish Standard English. Four choices were offered and they could select as many as they felt was appropriate to them. Based on the key areas of individual reasons why people switch (Holmes 1992, Trudgill, 2000) the choices were:

- To make myself understood
- Because of the status of the person
- Because of the formality of the situation
- To change the topic of the conversation

The overall results were:

Table 7.13 Responses of all age groups on the reasons for switching between dialect and SSE

Why do you code-switch?	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 +	Total
To make myself understood	18 (90%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	20 (100%)	98
Because of the status of the person	3 (15%)	6 (20%)	4 (14%)	3 (15%)	16
Due to the formality of the situation	6 (30%)	15 (50%)	12 (40%)	3 (15%)	36
Change the topic of the conversation	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (10%)	4

Social distance is covered by the first of the choices in that informants could find themselves in a variety of social situations in which they had to practise effective communication. In some cases they might be familiar with the other participants in the interaction. Conversely there might be occasions when they felt that the most prudent course of action would be switch from dialect to a more standardised form of English. The status of the person relates to whether or not the informant perceived that person to be in a position that would preclude the use of their own way of

speaking in case this led to ridicule or misinterpretation of information. Formality in this context relates to whether a speech event has taken place at a formal meeting or public event. This also includes weddings, talks, lectures or appearing on the media. In the last choice the informant could say whether or not they would switch because of the topic or the subject of the discourse. Only 4 people said that they would switch because of the topic of conversation so this would appear to be of minor importance in terms of reasons for code-switching.

Almost all the informants – 98 out of 100 - said that they code-switched to make themselves understood. Although it could be argued that this was a fairly obvious response it might have a deeper meaning. This option was set to try to examine the social distance between participants in a number of speech situations. Comments on this statement included the point that the purpose of speaking to any person is to communicate in the most effective manner. Whether or not the communicants were known to each other is not the issue. The outcome of the speech is the key feature so it would appear that the Orkney people are more aware of the effect of their dialect and wish to be understood at all times.

On reflection it might have been useful to address the issue of familiarity by adding an extra option. This is covered in Chapter 8 where the communication with people from occupational and social groupings is analysed and the familiarity is alluded to by consideration of the extent of dialect use.

Status does not appear to be an issue in the Orcadian situation. Only 16 people out of 100 gave status as a reason for switching from dialect to SSE. From the oldest age

group only 3 people said that they would change because of the status of the person. In the 16-24 age group 3 young people gave this answer. Even in the middle age group's figures were low with 6 people in the 25-44 group and 4 from the 45-64 group thinking that status was a factor in the way they changed between the dialect and SSE.

The formality of the situation gained more responses with a total of 36 people saying that they would change in a variety of formal situations. Within the age groupings the notable figures were 15 people or 50% of the 25-44 category and 12 from the 45- 64 age group stating that they would change due to or in consideration of the formality of the situation. The 16-24 group were less sure on this question and only 6 from 20 said that formality would influence how they spoke. Only 3 people in the 65 group felt that they needed to change because of formal situations.

The last option, in connect with changing the topic of the conversation was the least popular with only 4% of the total number of respondents saying that they might switch in order to change the topic under discussion. This was, in some ways, surprising and interesting. It is surprising in that it would imply that Orkney people do not consider it necessary to switch to speak about serious issues or even to change the subject of the conversation. It is interesting as it suggests that the indigenous population have the confidence to talk on any topic without reverting to a standard form of English.

7.5 Speaking Dialect at formal meetings

The purpose of this question was to look at the amount of dialect spoken at formal meetings. A formal meeting would be any gathering of individuals who have congregated for the purpose of holding a properly constituted meeting. Such meetings could be staff meetings, committee meetings, special interest groups, community councils, clubs, societies or conferences and seminars.

Informants were given 5 choices and asked: do you speak dialect at all times, regularly, seldom, not at all or is this not applicable. The overall results were:

Table 7.14 Showing the responses from all age groups to dialect spoken at formal meetings

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 +	Totals
At all times	2 (10%)	6 (20%)	7 (23%)	5 (25%)	20
Regularly	10 (50%)	15 (50%)	19 (64%)	5 (25%)	49
Seldom	5 (25%)	7 (23%)	2 (7%)	2 (10%)	16
Not at all	1 (5%)	0	1 (3%)	1 (5%)	3
Not applicable	2 (10%)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	7 (35%)	12

According to the figures 20 people, one fifth of the total number of informants, use dialect at all times at formal meetings. Only 2 people from the 16-24 age group gave this response while 5 people age 65+ said that they use dialect all the time. In the middle two groups about 6%-7% said that they did not change the way they spoke when attending meetings. It is difficult to say what response was expected for this option. If it is assumed that nearly everyone will speak SSE or use formal language at

meetings then this response is quite interesting as it indicates that 20% of the people will use dialect at all times.

Almost 50% of the total informants said that they use dialect regularly at formal meetings. If this is added to the number of people who use dialect at all times this would suggest that nearly 70% of local people use dialect at such meetings. When asked what they meant by regular use of dialect, informants said that they tried to use the vernacular whenever they felt comfortable with it. After further discussion it emerged that informants wished to use dialect when they could as they felt more comfortable and relaxed at formal meetings.

Looking at the breakdown of age groups it appears that 50% of the younger age group use dialect on a regular basis at formal meetings. At the other end of the age spectrum only 5 people from the 65+ group gave this response. Exactly 50% of the 25-44 age group said that they would use dialect regularly when attending meetings while 19 people or almost 66% of the 45-64 age group gave this as their response. When asked about those responses, the young people said that they try to speak dialect when they thought it was suitable. The middle age groups felt that their experience as members of various committees and their confidence in the use of dialect meant that it was fine to speak it when they could. They felt that it was possible to express their thoughts and feelings in a succinct way by the use of the local tongue.

Only 16 people said that they seldom spoke dialect at formal meetings. The reasons given were that the nature of the meetings were considered to be more official and one was almost expected to speak in the “most proper way” in an effort to be taken

seriously or consider the items under discussion from a serious perspective. The breakdown was 5 young people and 7 age 25-44 which is interesting in that some people feel that they must speak SSE in order to “fit in” and also dialect might also be considered to be frivolous in the context of, for example, a meeting of Orkney Islands Council.

Moving from the formal meetings to the media, the next section will examine the use of dialect and local accents from a local and national perspective. With the preponderance of television and radio channels and the possibility of using the world-wide-web for communications, the global media now exert a considerable influence on the lives of people living in rural areas. This part of the thesis will consider the view from an Orcadian perspective.

7.6 The use of dialect on Radio Orkney

Radio Orkney is the local radio station and is run by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It started broadcasting to the people of Orkney in May 1977. Using a VHF or FM frequency Radio Orkney broadcasts on 93.7 FM which is used for BBC Scotland for most of the day.

The studio at Castle Street in Kirkwall broadcasts daily from 7.30a.m. till 8.00 a.m. The programme “Around Orkney” consists of a news bulletin and weather forecast along with a daily “What’s On” diary. In addition there will be reports from the local sales at the Auction Mart and a round up of the jobs available around the islands. Some of the news items will be featured on the programme and personalities are interviewed on a wide range of topics.

In addition to the daily magazine programme a request programme is featured each Friday with guest presenters. From October to April there are nightly programmes such as “Bruck” (a swap shop and magazine), “Whassigo” – a panel game looking at the definition of dialect words and “The Dashing White Farmer” which consists of Scottish dance music. Those programmes are transmitted from 1810 – 1900 each evening.

With such a varied output Radio Orkney needs a pool of people who are able to present the programmes in the morning and evening. Most of the presenters are Orcadians or people with a strong Orcadian background. The question asked on the questionnaire was as follows:

Radio Orkney have presenters who speak dialect – what is your view on the following statement? I enjoy it and it should be encouraged. Do you:

Strongly agree	No strong feelings	Strongly disagree
Agree	Disagree	

The overall results were:

Table 7.15 Views of informants on the use of dialect on Radio Orkney and their level of enjoyment on hearing it spoken on local radio.

Should dialect be encouraged	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 +	Totals
Strongly agree	14 (70%)	27 (90%)	22 (74%)	13 (65%)	76
Agree	5 (25%)	3 (10%)	8 (26%)	5 (25%)	21
No strong feelings	1 (5%)	0	0	2 (10%)	3
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0

There was an overwhelming majority in favour of the use of dialect with 76 people strongly agreeing with the statement that dialect speakers should be encouraged to use dialect when they are presenting on the local radio station. It is interesting to note that 14 young people enjoyed dialect on the radio with 5 agreeing with the sentiment and only 1 having no strong feelings. In the most senior age group the figures almost correspond with the young people with 13 saying that they strongly agreed, 5 agreed and 2 people had no strong feelings. There were no negative answers in this category with no person disagreeing with the statement.

Most of the 25-44 said that dialect should be strongly encouraged with 27 people giving this answer. The remaining 3 people agreed with the statement. The 45-64 age group held similar opinions with 22 informants strongly in agreement and 8 people agreeing that the use of dialect should be encouraged.

Some of the comments made by informants were as follows:

“Certain dialect on Radio Orkney may be a bit exaggerated”	SK-F46
“I like a good balance of voices on Radio Orkney”	KW-M39
“On Radio Orkney hearing the really old folk sounds natural but no modern dialect”	SM-M19
“Good to hear folk on Radio Orkney speak as much dialect as possible”	KW-M49
“It is the local station so you would expect to hear local folk on it!”	SY-F84

7.7 Regional accents and dialects in the national media

The next question focused on the use of regional accents and dialect on the national media. In the early days of broadcasting and through the reports from the years of the Second World War, the announcers and newsreaders spoke in tones that were well modulated and without a trace of any accent other than that of the “Queen’s English” In the last 20 years or so there has been a change with radio and television presenters using Scottish, Irish and Welsh accents as well as a number of variations from all over England. The statement that there seem to be a move away from Received Pronunciation to the use of regional accents was made and informants were asked to express their viewpoint on this state of affairs. The choices were:

- It is refreshing
- Fine – but it does not treat the news in a serious manner
- It should be discouraged
- Makes no difference to the programme
- Should not be allowed

Table 7.16 Views of all respondents to the use of regional accents on national radio and television programmes

Use of regional accents and dialect:	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 +	Totals
It is refreshing	13(65%)	27(90%)	21(70%)	14(70%)	75
Fine- does not treat news seriously	1 (5%)	2(7%)	6(20%)	4(20%)	13
Makes no difference to the programme	5(25%)	1(3%)	3(10%)	1(5%)	10
Should be discouraged	1(5%)	0	0	1(5%)	2
Should not be allowed	0	0	0	0	0

There is a remarkable conformity between the figures in connection with the use of dialect on Radio Orkney and the change to more regional accents on national media. Looking at the figure 6.15 and comparing line 1 on that with line 1 on Figure 6.16 this is the result.

Table 7.17 Comparisons between figures 6.15 and 6.16

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 +	Totals
Figure (Radio Orkney)	14 (70%)	27 (90%)	22 (74%)	13 (65%)	76
Figure (national media)	13 (65%)	27 (90%)	21 (70%)	14 (70%)	75

Once again there seem to be wide support for the shift from more formalised accents to the use of vernacular and regional accents. The results for the response “ enjoy it and should be encouraged”, with regard to Radio Orkney presenters, show little

difference to the response for “ it is refreshing” in connection with the move to more regional accents on the national media.

On the topic of “fine but it does not treat the news seriously” just 13 people expressed this view with the strongest opinions held by the 45-64 and 65+ age groups. There were comments that sometimes news items covering tragedies or serious accidents are better handled by someone talking in SSE or Standard English as this would carry more weight and have more gravitas.

Two people felt that use of regional variations should be discouraged while a total of 10 people thought that it made no difference to the programme. It is interesting to note that 5 young people thought that it made no difference.

To summarise, the main feeling appeared to be that it is acceptable to hear some local accents and dialects especially on regional stations. In both cases about 75% of the informants said that it was refreshing or that it should be encouraged.

7.8 The effect of TV and other forms of media on the use of dialect in Orkney

Informants were then asked to ascertain the effects of TV and other forms of media have on the use of dialect in Orkney. The choices were:

- Media has greatly encouraged the use of dialect
- Encouraged it to some extent
- Media has had no real effect on the use of dialect
- Discouraged the use of dialect

- Very strongly discouraged use of dialect
- Do not know

The response is detailed in the following table:

Table 7.18 Responses from all age groups to the effect of the national media on the use of dialect in Orkney

Effects of national media on the use of the Orkney dialect	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 +	Totals
Greatly encouraged it	0	0	1(3%)	1(5%)	2
Encouraged it to some extent	1(5%)	0	0	1(5%)	2
No real effect	7(35%)	5(17%)	3(10%)	3(15%)	18
Discouraged the use of dialect	9(45%)	19(63%)	17(57%)	13(65%)	58
Very strongly discouraged it	1(5%)	6(20%)	8(27%)	2(10%)	17
Do not know	2(10%)	0	1(3%)	0	3

The first two sections gained little response with only 2 people thinking that the media had greatly encouraged the use of dialect. This was perhaps inevitable although the people who gave this answer suggested that some Orcadians might be encouraged to use dialect even more as they would be bombarded by it from all sides of the media!

Nearly 20% of the total informants thought that the media had no influence on the use of dialect in Orkney. This is somewhat surprising but suggests the independence and the resilience of the people of Orkney. It is noteworthy that 7 of the 20 young people held this view.

About 60% of the people interviewed felt that the media had discouraged the use of dialect to some extent. Almost half the number of 16-24 year olds took this view with 19 people from the 25-44 expressing this opinion. The next age group 45-64 were a little less certain but the 65+ were fairly vociferous with 13 people almost convinced that the TV and papers were to blame for the way some people speak in the islands.

The number of people who said that media had very strongly influenced the use of dialect was 17 so if the previous total of 58 is added to this figure it mean that 75% of all respondents thought that the media had been very influential in its power to affect the way that Orcadians speak.

The overall impression is that the plethora of media available to people at the present day has influenced the way that people use the dialect. If the figures in this section are compared with the views of the informants with regard to the use of dialect on local radio and the changes that have taken place in the national media, then one might suggest that there are positive opinions that could be mobilised to encourage more people to use the vernacular.

7.9 Prestige and Dialect

The next question focused on the value placed on dialect over Scottish Standard English. Informants were asked to state what level of advantage could be gained by using SSE over their local Orcadian dialect. It is important to mention that 10 people simply had no comment with 16 people saying that they did not know the answer.

The results were:

Table 7.19 Responses to the levels of advantage in connection with using SSE over Orkney dialect

	16-24	25-44	45-64	65 +	Totals
Very clear advantage	1(7%)		1(4%)	1 (5%)	3
Does give some advantage	4(23%)	13(45%)	3(13%)	10(53%)	30
No real advantage	7(35%)	10(35%)	11(46%)	3(16%)	31
Does not give people advantage	1(7%)	2(7%)	3(13%)		6
Definitely not an advantage			2(8%)	2(11%)	4
Do not know	5(28%)	4(13%)	4(16%)	3(15%)	16

When people are faced with the choice of speaking their own dialect or using a form of Standard English, one of the influential factors in making the decision could be the level of prestige value held by dialect. To what extent does the use of SSE give people an advantage? Is there a conscious decision made by people to speak SSE with a view that it will benefit them in some way?

As will be seen from Table 6.19, only 3 people think that use of SSE does give people a clear advantage. Those people held jobs that required them to use SSE at regular intervals and this would have shaped their attitude to the use of dialect. In the next choice 30 informants said that SSE gives people some advantage. It will be noted that only 4 young people chose this option and only 3 informants from the 45-64 age group. This is perhaps surprising although the view might be taken to mean that it was not necessary to speak SSE to succeed in the world.

In the 25-44 age group almost 50% of the total believed that SSE gives some advantage. It might be safe to speculate that this could have been related to work conditions or career prospects. Exactly half of the 65+ gave this response so it could be suggested that this age group did not need to use SSE to further their work prospects or create a particular image.

Looking at the figures for the “no real advantage” option a total of 30 people felt that this was the appropriate response. In the 16-24 category, 7 young people thought there was nothing to be gained by speaking SSE in preference to dialect. The 25-44 and 45-64 age group were fairly consistent with 10 and 11 people giving this option as their answer. Only 3 people from the 65+ group thought that SSE was no real advantage.

If the figures for the next two sections are brought together the total number of people who think that SSE has no advantage over dialect is 10. The 45-64 and 65+ age groups are more adamant with 2 people from each group taking the “definitely does not” approach to the question. Only 6 informants chose the “does not” option with a fairly low response in each of the groups with the exception of the 65+ group.

The comments in this section give a flavour of the reasons behind the answers. Those comments relate to the particular speech situations related to work and occasionally social situations.

A number of people spoke about the perceived need to use SSE when applying for a job:

“...because of interview panels for jobs, folk are expected to speak English” SN-F39

“Possibly need to tone doon Orcadian for any job interviews....” SY-F23

“Depends on the job and where you are – doon sooth or home in Orkney” SK-F20

On the wider scale some informants found it difficult to give a definitive answer:

“ Can’t really answer properly but..... it depends on the type of work, for example SSE could be an advantage for public service workers while farmers would likely say that it was no advantage to speak English” SY-M68

One person made a notable point:

“it does not hold you back and, indeed, people like hearing it.....” KW-F28

Some informants said that they did change depending on the situation in which they found themselves:

“ ... I drift in and out of dialect depending on the situation....” WY-F39

“Depends on the type of work I am doing and who I am with at the time” SM-F57

Finally a number of the informants were reluctant to admit that using SSE was an advantage:

“ I wish I could say it wis no advantage but I suppose it is....” BY-F41

“ Regrettably, it does seem to be some advantage to folk.....” SP-F48

“ We should not hiv tae change” KW-F49

“ I would like tae think that its no advantage to speak English...” SY-F68

7.10 How islands and parishes may be identified by their use of dialect

The next question to be considered on the questionnaire was the ways in which the different islands and parishes in Orkney could be identified by their use of dialect.

Table 7.20 Islands and Parishes identified by their use of dialect

	(16-24)	(25-44)	(45-64)	(65+)	TOTALS
Kirkwall	1	6	2	4	13
Finstown	1				1
Orphir		1			1
Harray		2	3	2	7
Sandwick	1	1	1	1	4
Rendall				1	1
Evie		1			1
Stromness	1	5	2	2	10
Birsay	1	5	2	5	13
Stenness	1				1
Holm		1		1	2
Tankerness	1	3			4
Deerness		2	3	2	7
Burray	1	2	2	1	6
South Ronaldsay	2	9	8	6	25
Shapinsay		1	1	1	3
Flotta	1	1	3	2	7
Rousay			1	1	2
Hoy		1		1	2
Eday		2			2
Stronsay	4	5	11	3	23
Sanday	2	7	3		12
Westray	18	26	25	14	83
Papa Westray	1	10	8	6	25
North Ronaldsay	1	11	20	11	43

The most frequent responses were:

- Westray 83
- North Ronaldsay 43
- South Ronaldsay 25
- Papa Westray 25
- Stronsay 23
- Birsay 13
- Kirkwall 13
- Sanday 12
- Stromness 10

Two informants did recognise a number of different islands and parishes; reasons given were that one was familiar with them because of his regular contact with them in connection with work in the farming community, another because he had a keen and long held interest in the use of dialect throughout Orkney and had undertaken talks on the subject in many of the islands and parishes mentioned in the questionnaire.

On the questionnaire a total of 10 islands and 13 parishes, along with Kirkwall and Stromness, were mentioned. Informants were asked to name any of those places where they could recognise by the dialect they used. People could choose any number of islands and parishes as the main focus was on highlighting the strongest use of dialect and the possible reasons why those variations were recognised.

The most identifiable dialect features are those from the North Isles of Orkney.

Westray was recognised by 83 people out of 100. From the age groups, 18 young people said that they would be able to identify Westray while only 14 of the 65+ group was able to know the “Westray twang” The 25-44 and 45-64 age groups appeared to be very aware of the dialect from this island with around 80% from each group mentioning Westray.

Over 40% of the informants recognised the island of North Ronaldsay. It is important to mention that only 1 person from the 16-24 age group gave this response while 11 people from the 25-44 and 65+ mentioned North Ronaldsay. Over 66% of the 45-64 age group said that they would know a person from the most northerly island by the way they spoke.

On the Mainland of Orkney along with the linked south isles of Burray and South Ronaldsay, the furthest south parish of South Ronaldsay attracted the attention of 25% of the total informants. The parish of Birsay on the North West of the Mainland accounted for 13 responses. Perhaps surprisingly 13 people said that they would recognise someone from Kirkwall by the way they spoke. Ten people said that they would recognise the inhabitants of Stromness by the way they spoke. While the recognition of people from the extremities of Birsay and South Ronaldsay is not surprising, the towns are populated by a mixture of people from various parts of Orkney and other parts of UK. It could be postulated that there is a definitive Kirkwall dialect and the town of Stromness might have a variety hitherto not identified.

As will be noted from Figure 6.20, every parish or island has at least one response. This is a notable feature as it implies that each individual might detect a small nuance or noticeable tone which is not identified by any other person. The main places to be recognised are Westray and North Ronaldsay with South Ronaldsay and Papa Westray to a lesser extent. As the informants came from a wide variety of backgrounds and places, they shared some variations but had not been exposed to others

Some people from the youngest and oldest age groups had not met many people from the outer islands so were not aware of specific ways of speaking. Conversely the 25-44 and the 45-64 age groups had more experience due to travel and work so were able to have more conclusive responses as a result.

Reasons for identifying the variations were as follows:

“Some of the words used in the islands are different”	SK-M76
“The sound a lilt o the voice – with a strangulated vowel soond!”	SW-F74
“The Westray folk pronounce their a with a long aa sound”	KW-M49
“Kirkwall folks says “pipper” for paper and “plit” for plate”	OP-F37
“Different ways of saying “yes” – in North Ronaldsay “yo”, in Westray “ya “and yas in Shapinsay”	HY-F30

“Use of “ick” names in Hoy or Flotta e.g. “Willick” or “Jimmick” KW-F28

“Sanday seems a few octaves higher than some Mainland areas” HY-M62

“Use of thee (you) and “thoo” especially in Westray and Papa Westray” EV-M42

In summary, the main issues, surrounding the recognition of different places, seems to focus on three areas:

- i) Experience of the islands through work or family background appears to have a strong influence on the knowledge of different words or idioms of expression.
- ii) The North Isles appear to have an underlying reputation for being different based on their geographic isolation and distance from the main centre of population in Kirkwall. This perception would appear to be confirmed by the high incidence of Westray as a choice of 83 informants
- iii) It is also possible that some informants of the younger group have a less prescriptive approach to differences and may not be so aware of the features as their elders. This could be linked to media and peer groups that consist of people whose birthplace was outwith the Orkney Islands.

7.11 Summary of Chapter Seven

The survey looked at attitudes towards the use of dialect covering a range of factors and speech situations. The use of dialect in everyday situations or at meetings was

covered and the use of regional voices on the media was featured. Code-switching was also examined where people were asked how often they would change their way of speaking switching from dialect to SSE and the reasons for this change.

One of the key questions related to the greatest influences on the use of dialect where informants had the option to choose from 4 options and number them from 1 to 4 in order of preference. In summary, exactly half of the informants thought that the migrants (incomers) were the greatest influence on the use of dialect. The media elicited a strong second preference with 25% of the total. Those two responses might be considered as significant as the migrants could have been seen as a greater threat than those figures indicate. The assertion that the incomers are having a detrimental affect on the dialect could therefore be challenged.

With regard to dialect in everyday life, 78 people said that they use it very frequently or frequently and that they would try to use dialect at meetings or formal occasions. It would appear that the informants do not switch very frequently and, when they do switch the main purpose is to be understood rather than the formality of the situation or the status of the persons within the speech situation.

Most informants thought that the use of regional varieties within the media was enjoyable and refreshing although some felt that dialect could be "pittan on" or used in a mocking fashion on the radio in order to provide a more entertaining effect.

People in the middle age groups seemed to have more confidence to use dialect. This resilience might be due to the fact that those people grew up in a more dialect

orientated society where the influence of external factors such as migration and media were less prevalent.

The value placed on dialect was also important and the prestige attached to SSE was mentioned by most of the informants. Young people felt they had to use SSE in order to secure employment or to be accepted in some social situations. There was a reluctance however in that people seemed compelled to change in order to portray a more educated or erudite image.

From this questionnaire and the responses the conclusion could be drawn that most people will attempt to use dialect where they feel it would not impinge on the communication. The overall conclusion from the material collected that suggests that Orkney dialect is not a language variant under threat but more of way of speaking that is still appreciated by the users. The main concerns appeared to be directed towards the clarity of communication where dialect speakers acknowledged the need to be understood by people who did not use the Orkney tongue.

Chapter Eight

The survey findings related to the use of dialect

This chapter covers question 10 of the questionnaire featuring 17 different social or occupational groups. Informants were asked to rate the frequency of use of dialect when interacting with members of the particular groups. The frequency ratings were:

- 5 Always use dialect**
- 4 Often use dialect**
- 3 Might use dialect**
- 2 Often use SSE**
- 1 Always use SSE**

The groups were made up as follows:

Section one

Members of the family	MFY
Personal friends	PFD
Neighbours	NBR
Work Colleagues	WKC
Speaking on the telephone	TEL

Section two

Doctor	DOC
Teacher/Lecturer	TLR
Minister	MTR
Lawyer	LYR

Section three

Agricultural Department Official	ADO
Councillor (Orkney Islands Council)	CLR
Council Office Official	COO
District Nurse	DN

Section four

Taxi driver/postman	TXP
Policeman	POL
Bank staff	BKS
Shop Assistants	SAT

The main reasons for choosing the categories detailed above were:

- i) It was necessary to find an appropriate variety of social and occupational groupings in order to establish whether or not there was a marked difference between the groups.
- ii) In a close knit island community it is easy to assume that people are familiar with one another. This had to be carefully monitored in order to provide appropriate and accurate data which would reflect the opinions of the population.

iii) Categories needed to cover the complexities of island life and take cognisance of the inter-relationships between professional people and manual workers, between island dwellers and townsfolk, between agricultural officers and farmers, between the migrants and the indigenous population.

Section one is comprised of members of the family, personal friends, neighbours and work colleagues. Informants are likely to be in regular contact with this group of people. The social distance between the participants is likely to be close and, in this context personal relationships are at the forefront.

Professional people occupy **Section two**. Those individuals are likely to be contacted by informants on the level of a business relationship. Doctors, lawyers, minister, teachers and lecturers may also be viewed as higher status than members of other group so this might affect the way that they are addressed.

In **Section three** the emphasis is on occupations such as district nurse, council office officials along with agricultural development officers and elected members of the Orkney Islands Council. Members of this group are more likely to be contacted for information or to assist with administrative tasks. Topic to be discussed is very relevant in this area.

The **final section** consists of people who might be approached at infrequent intervals as they provide a service to the community. There might be social relationships formed with taxi drivers, shop assistants, police officers and bank staff but the more likely scenario is one of engaging the members when their services are required.

On the questionnaire this question was framed in a manner that would not follow the grouping as set out above. In order to ensure that informants chose each option on its own merits the occupations were arranged in a fairly random order. In this way a particular grouping would not be chosen and informants had to view the members of each group on an individual basis. For the purposes of analysis, however, it is more helpful if the groupings are arranged in a way that will provide a more composite and meaningful picture of the use of dialect in a variety of different circumstances.

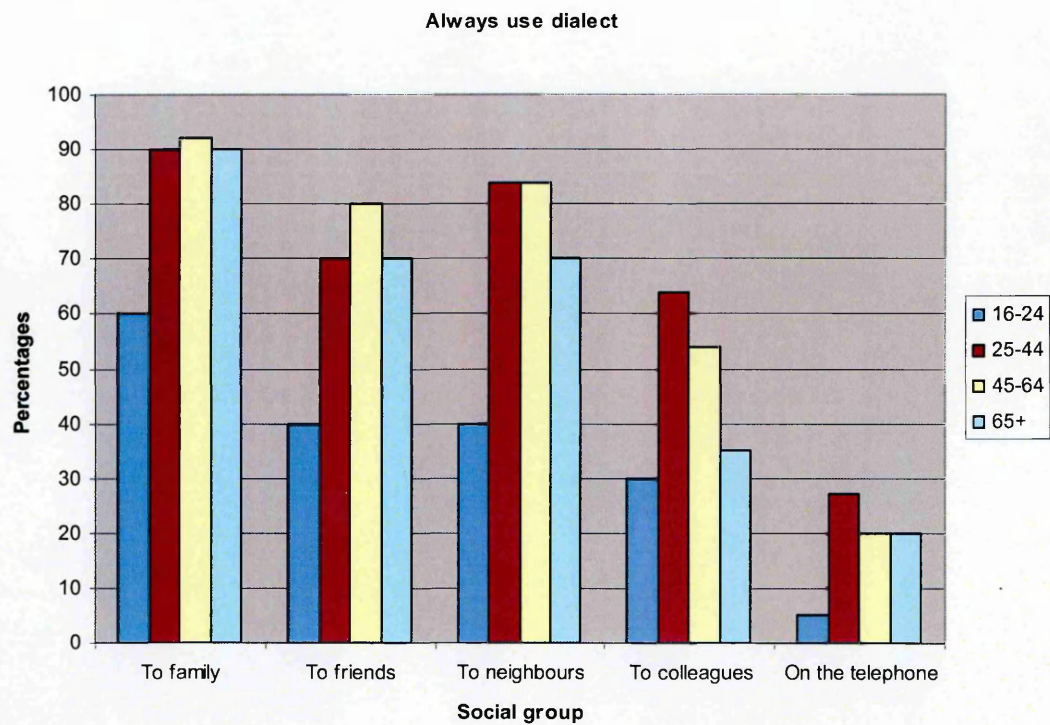
Age groups	A	B	C	D
	16 – 24	25 – 44	45 – 64	65+

Section One

Table 8.1 The responses in group one: members of the family, personal friends, neighbours, work colleagues and talking on the telephone

	Always dialect				Often dialect				Might use dialect or SSE				Often use SSE				Always use SSE			
Family	85				10				3				2				0			
Total 100	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
	2	27	28	18	5	3	2	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Friends	67				17				13				2				1			
Total 100	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
	8	21	24	14	5	7	4	1	4	2	2	5	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Neighbours	72				17				8				2				1			
Total 100	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
	8	25	25	14	6	4	2	5	3	0	3	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Colleagues	48				23				14				3				1			
Total 89	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
	6	19	16	7	7	7	8	1	4	3	5	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Telephone	19				27				37				12				5			
Total 100	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
	1	8	6	4	5	7	7	8	8	12	1	6	6	3	3	0	1	0	2	2

Diagram 8.1 Always use dialect: family, friends, neighbours work colleagues and talking on the telephone.



8.1 Members of the family

It is interesting to note that a total of 85 people said that they always use dialect when conversing with their families. A total of 10 people often use dialect while only 3 said that they might use dialect or SSE. Two young people apparently use SSE regularly when speaking to family. Looking at the age breakdown, 12 out of 20 from the 16-24 age group said that they always speak dialect to their family. Nearly all the middle age groups speak in the vernacular with 18 people from the 65 + group using dialect at all times. Five young people said that they often used dialect. Only 3 people from the 25-44 and 2 in the 45-64 groups stated that they often use dialect. In the “might use dialect” 1 young person and 2 from the 65 + group gave this response.

The figures would suggest that the use dialect within families is very regular and that all age groups appear to use dialect within the framework of their families. Whether this is in the home or between the wider family group was not established. The feeling was that if dialect is spoken a lot in then home then that will continue unless this is influenced by any external factors.

8.2 Personal friends

When asked about how dialect was used in any communications with personal friends, 67 people said that they would always use dialect. From the remaining 23 informants, 17 of them said that they would often use dialect with 13 either using dialect or SSE. One young person said that she used SSE at all times and 2 of this age group said that they would often use SSE when talking with their friends. Some of the comments made were; “it depends whar me friends come fae”. A number of people had friends from outwith Orkney so indicated the need to be understood by speaking less dialect.

Only 8 out of 20 from the 16-24 age group said that they always used dialect when speaking to personal friends. They said that it depended in which location – whether or not the interaction was taking place in Orkney or “doon sooth”. Five said that they often use dialect with 4 opting for use of SSE or dialect. It would appear that there was some allegiance to the mother tongue among the young people.

Both the 25-44 and the 45-64 groups overwhelmingly commented that they use dialect at all times with 21 and 24 people preferring to use the dialect. One of the comments was that “ the majority of our friends understand us anyway” so there

seemed little need to change to SSE. This is perhaps surprising given the number of migrants in some of the islands.

Nearly 75% of the 65+ age group said that they spoke dialect at all times when they were in the company of their friends. The majority of the friends in this age group were Orcadians but 5 people did say that they might use dialect or SSE as there were a few “incomers in the parish”

Once again this category did not highlight much use of SSE with few people using it to any extent and most of the informants using dialect for most of the time. Only 1 person said that she used SSE most or all of the time and the main reason for this was that she spent most of her time out of Orkney anyway.

8.3 Neighbours

Almost 75% of all respondents said that they use dialect at all times when speaking to their neighbours. Seventeen people suggested that they often used dialect while 8 said either SSE or dialect. Those figures reflect a situation that might be unexpected in consideration of certain areas where the influx of migrants has been fairly constant over the past 20 – 30 years. It might have been safe to postulate that more Orcadians would have used SSE as their neighbours would be incomers who did not speak the local dialect of the islands.

Looking at the age groups, only 8 people said that they used dialect at all times with 6 saying that they often used dialect when speaking to neighbours and 3 people saying that they might use either SSE or dialect. Two young people said that they would

often use SSE and one person said that she would use dialect all the time. Possible explanations for the responses of this age group might be that this age group have less contact with neighbours than people then their elders.

Both the 25-44 and the 45-64 groups displayed a degree of conformity, once again, with 25 people in each group saying that they spoke dialect to their neighbours at all times. Few people opted for the “often use dialect” category with 4 from 25-44 and 2 from 45-64. The 65+ age group were also fairly determined to use the vernacular with 14 using dialect at all times and 5 saying that they would often use dialect. Figures might use SSE, often use SSE and always use SSE in all three categories are very low indicating a wide use of dialect when speaking to neighbours.

There are a number of issues to be addressed in connection with communications with neighbours in terms of social structure along with attitudes and cultural differences. People living in Kirkwall, for example, might only say “hello” to their neighbour while someone living in Sanday could have developed friendships with people living in close proximity. In some of the islands, such as Eday, Sanday, Westray, Hoy along with Stronsay and North Ronaldsay, migrants have congregated in certain parts of the islands. In cultural terms some Orcadians maintain that they have little in common with the “folk that has moved in”. Relationships in this context have not been established and there is little exchange of discourse or dialogue.

8.4 Work colleagues

Less than 50% of the total number of informants said that they use dialect at all times when speaking to their counterparts in a work situation. From a total of 48 people,

only 6 from the 16-24 age group spoke dialect at work. At the other end of the age spectrum 7 out of 20 from the 65+ group said that they spoke dialect. It is important to mention that a number of people in this group said that they were retired anyway! The figures from the 25-44 age group of 19 people is almost mirrored by 16 people in the 45-64 group.

In the “often use dialect” section, a total of 23 people revealed that they use dialect fairly frequently when speaking to people at work. In the younger age group 7 people gave this response and similar numbers from the middle age groups chose this option. Only 1 person from the 65+ group said that they would often use dialect. A total of 14 people said that they might use dialect at work. This was broken down to 4 age 16-24, 3 age 25-44 and 5 age 45-64 with 2 people age 65+ giving this as their option.

It would appear that, in a work environment, there is a notable difference in the way people speak compared with their communication within families or with friends in a social context. This could be connected to the need to use more specific terms that do not translate well into dialect. It could also be influenced by a workforce where a number of migrants are employed. The main theme is that it is essential to be understood and it is better not to use dialect to the exclusion of SSE as this might lead to misunderstandings with serious consequences.

8.5 Speaking on the telephone

The question as framed was “answering the telephone” but was broadened in the interviews to encompass actual conversations during the telephone call. Only 19 people said that they spoke dialect at all times when using the phone. Although this is

20% of the total, it still leaves 80% not using dialect as their mode of communication at all times.

Only 1 young person said that they always used dialect while in the 65 and over age group only 4 gave this response. Figures were also fairly low in the other groups with 8 people from the 25-44 and 6 people from the 45-64 age group. Those figures are revealing in that they differ from other responses within the section in connection with face to face or personal contact.

About 25% of the informants said that they would often use dialect on the phone. There is regularity in the breakdown of age groups with 5, 7, 7 and 8 respectively. It must be mentioned that only 7 from the middle age groups equates to 23% of the total from that group while 8 from the 65+ group is 40% of the total for this group!

Over 30% of the total informants said that they might use dialect or SSE when speaking on the phone. From a total of 37 people the breakdown was: 8 from 16-24, 12 from 25-44, 11 from 45-64 and 6 in the 65+ group. In the often use SSE section 12 people chose this option with 6 young people and 3 from each of the other age groups.

A total of 5 people said that they always used SSE on the telephone. Two people from the 45 -64 and 65+ chose this option with one young person saying that they would not speak dialect when speaking on the phone.

The mixed responses within this section suggest a divergence of attitudes towards the use of dialect when speaking on the telephone. Some of the informants commented

that it was dependent on the identity of the person at the “other end o the line”. Others said that, during the course of their work, they had to be understood so the use of SSE was preferable to dialect in a number of cases.

Is the phone still perceived as a formal means of communication by many Orcadians?

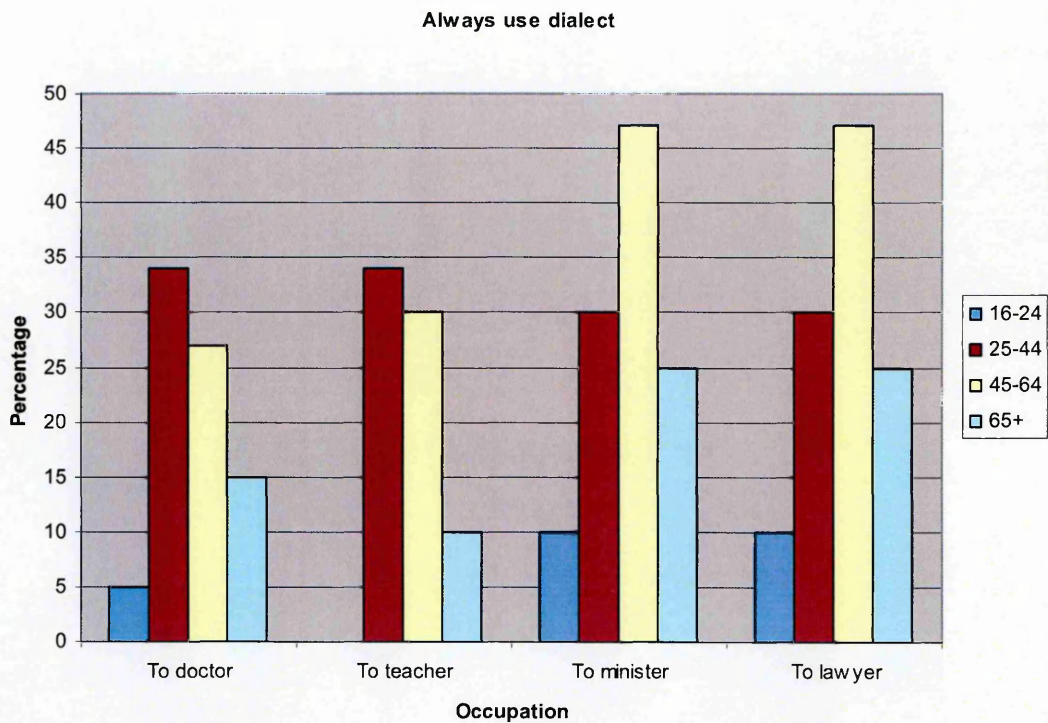
Even though formalities seem to breakdown in a number of areas in society it is possible that communication where the participants cannot be seen by each other still carries the expectation of standards not provided by the use of local dialect.

Section Two

Table 8.2 The responses in group two: doctor, teacher/lecturer minister and lawyer

	Always dialect				Often dialect				3 Might use dialect or SSE				2 Often use SSE				1 Always use SSE			
Doctor	22				26				25				16				11			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
100	1	10	8	3	3	7	9	7	9	6	5	5	4	5	4	3	3	2	4	2
Teacher Lecturer	21				26				28				10				5			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
90	0	10	9	2	5	8	10	3	7	9	7	5	5	2	1	2	3	1	1	0
Minister	30				28				17				9				6			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
90	2	9	14	5	3	7	10	8	3	8	3	3	4	3	1	1	1	2	1	1
Lawyer	30				27				22				9				5			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
93	2	9	14	5	1	6	11	9	6	8	7	1	1	5	0	3	3	1	0	1

Diagram 8.2 Always use dialect: to the doctor, teacher, minister and lawyer



This group covers the professional occupations: doctor, teacher/lecturer, minister and lawyer. Those positions require the post holders to possess a university education along with training for their chosen profession. As Orkney is a small island community many of those positions are filled by people who have moved to the islands in order to take up the post.

8.6 Doctor

Responses in the use of dialect when speaking to the doctor category show a well balanced line of figures with 22 people saying that they spoke dialect at all times, 26 people saying sometimes use dialect and 25 people opting for using dialect or SSE. Sixteen people thought that they often used SSE and 11 people said that they always used SSE when consulting with their doctor.

Considering the responses of the 16-24 age group, only 1 person said that they always used dialect and 3 often used dialect. Almost half of this age group said that they might use dialect or SSE. A total of 7 people either often used SSE or used SSE at all times.

The figures from each of the 45-64 age groups are fairly consistent. About 33% or 10 people from the 25-44 age group apparently spoke to their doctor in dialect while 8 people from the 45-64 group thought that this was the case. It is true to say that the use of SSE is more prevalent in this section with about 15% of the total number using SSE often or at all times.

The results for the 65+ age group are quite intriguing with 3 out of 20 people always speaking dialect to their doctor and 2 always speaking English. Most of this age group either used dialect fairly often (35%) or might use dialect (25%) with only 15% of this group saying that they would often use SSE.

The overall pattern emerging from the responses is that there appears to be a balanced use of dialect when speaking to the doctor. Some of the comments made include:

“ I hiv kent me doctor for years so don’t need to chant”

SY-F84

“ Me doctor kens whit I say noo He his been in Orkney for a while....”HM-M59

It is interesting to speculate what those figures might have been had this survey been undertaken about 40 years ago. There might be a more relaxed approach to people

from the professions with the class barriers being broken down as society has become more egalitarian. Some studies have shown that problems have occurred when people from different cultures have contacted their medical practitioners and diagnoses have been misinterpreted or misrepresented as a result of language difficulties. In Orkney there does not appear to be a problem and most of the informants seemed to be fairly comfortable with their communication with members of the medical profession.

8.7 Teachers and lecturers

There is a remarkable similarity between the total figures for teachers and lecturers and the previous figures for medical practitioners. The total responses were:

In this category	5	4	3	2	1
	21	26	28	10	5
Compared with:	22	26	25	16	11

One feature of this category was that no person from the 16-24 age group said that they always used dialect when speaking to teachers or lecturers. This might indicate immediate experience in the field of education and conformity to the rules and expectations of school life. Five young people did say that they often used dialect when conversing with educators while 7 said that they might use dialect (or SSE). A further 5 people said that they might use SSE and 3 said that they would always use SSE.

At the other end of the age scale only 12 out of 20 people in the 65+ actually responded to the question. They felt that it might no longer relevant to them and that

there need for education had been satisfied. From the responses collected 2 people said that they would always use dialect, 3 said that they would often use dialect and 5 said that they might use dialect. Comments were made that when this age group were attending school all pupils were expected to speak “properly” – speak SSE. From a wider point of view the consensus was that this age group would have liked to use dialect wherever possible had they been allowed to do so.

The middle age groups display a level of accord which points toward shared experience and suggests that relationships with teachers and lecturers are treated in a similar fashion to that with doctors. In the 25-44 age group 10 people said that they would always use dialect while 9 people from the 45-64 expressed this view. Similar figures are evident in the “often use dialect” option with 8 and 10 respectively. Nine people from the 25-44 and 7 people from the 45-64 age group stated that they might use dialect when speaking to teachers. Few people would use SSE very often and only 1 person from each of the two middle age groups said that they would use SSE all the time.

What are the reasons behind the levels of agreement and similarities of responses with regard to this question? There does not seem to be a strong need for people to speak in a certain way to teachers and lecturers. Examination of the overall totals reveal that 20% of all informants would use dialect at all times while about 25% would use dialect on a regular basis 28% would use dialect or SSE.

One other point is worthy of mention; many educators from school teaching to college lecturing have strong Orcadian backgrounds. They have qualified and trained away

from the islands but returned to teach in Orkney. If those people are known in the community they might be contemporaries of the informants and would, therefore, be accepted as local folk rather than viewed as professional people.

8.8 Ministers and lawyers

The occupations of minister and lawyers are being considered together as the similarities in responses are striking. The figures very closely correspond with each other:

Table 8.2.1 The responses for the minister and lawyer options

Minister	30				28				17				9				6			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
	2	9	14	5	3	7	10	8	3	8	3	3	4	3	1	1	1	2	1	1
Lawyer	30				27				22				9				5			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
	2	9	14	5	1	6	11	9	6	8	7	1	1	5	0	3	3	1	0	1

In both cases 30 people thought that they would always use dialect when speaking to ministers and lawyers. In the “often use” category, 28 people chose this option in relation to the clergy while 27 said that they would often use dialect when discussing business with their lawyer. The number of people who might use dialect or SSE was fairly significant with an average of 20% of informants giving this response. Nine people in each case said that they would often use SSE if they were speaking to ministers and lawyers. Finally, 6 people said that they would always use SSE if they

were speaking to the minister while 5 people said they would use SSE to the legal representative.

It will be noted that only 90 people responded to the question in connection with ministers and 93 people gave a response to the option for lawyers. As was the case with all options for social and occupational groupings, informants were not expected, or obliged, to give a response to every option. In the context of ministers and lawyers some comments were made that “ I never see me minister” or “ I have never spoken to a lawyer in me life as I have never needed wan!”!

One of the remarkable features of the responses in the table above, is the identical figures for the “always use dialect” category. This might have been encouraged by the fact that the occupations were next to each other on the questionnaire. Only 2 young people said that they would always use dialect. Surprisingly in the 65+ age group only 5 people gave this response. About 30% of the 25-44 said that they would always use dialect but nearly 50% of the 45-64 gave this response.

Opinions are fairly mixed in the “often use dialect” and “might use dialect” categories with views well divided on whether or not people would use dialect. In the “often use SSE” and “always use SSE” categories, responses are fairly low for all age groups although the combined responses do account for about 16% of the total.

In summary it is not the case that people always speak SSE when conversing with the minister or a lawyer. As with other professionals – doctors and teachers – the way people speak is more likely to be influenced by the social distance and familiarity

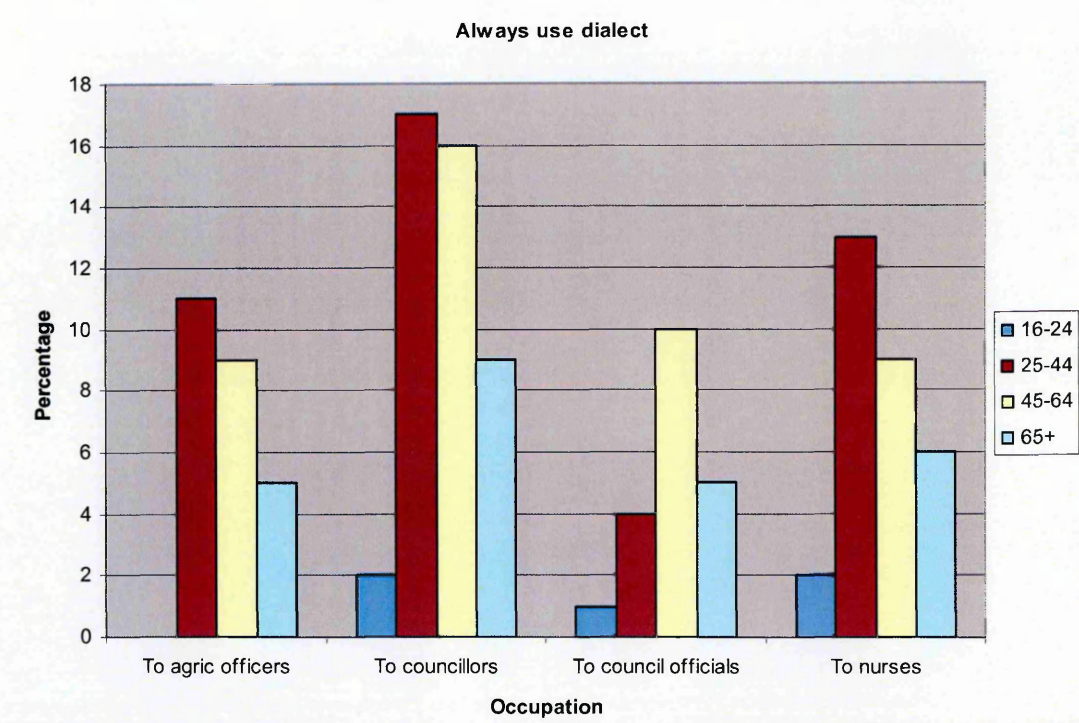
with the individual rather than their status and occupation. In island communities the minister is a key figure in the place and will forge friendships and build up trust with the parishioners. This is likely to lead to more relaxed communication and engender confidence in the use of dialect.

Section Three

Table 8.3 Showing the responses for group three: agricultural development officers, councillors, council office officials and district nurses.

	Always dialect				Often dialect				3 Might use dialect or SSE				2 Often use SSE				1 Always use SSE			
Agric Officials	25				10				16				5				1			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
57	0	11	9	5	1	5	2	2	1	5	8	2	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	0
Councillors	44				19				22				0				3			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
88	2	17	16	9	0	6	7	6	7	6	7	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
Council Officials	30				20				32				4				2			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
88	1	4	10	5	3	4	7	6	7	10	11	4	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	0
District Nurses	30				24				22				5				1			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
82	2	13	9	6	1	6	9	8	7	7	7	1	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	0

Diagram 8.3 Always use dialect: to the agricultural officers, councillors, council officials and district nurses



This group comprises people who work in the community either in positions of authority such as councillors or council officials or administrators such as people who are employed by the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department (SERAD) as officers. Also included are district nurses who fulfil an important function within a number of locations throughout the country. It is important to mention that not all informants had business with agricultural development officials, councillors or council officials and a number of people had never seen their district nurse!

8.9 Agricultural Development Officers

Only 57 people responded to the agricultural department officer option. This could have been due to the specialised nature of the post. One of the predominant industries

in Orkney is farming so agriculture would have impacted on the life of many of the informants in some way.

From the total of 57 people who said that they had dealt with ADO almost 50% of them said that they always used dialect and 10 people said that they often used dialect when speaking to those officials. As the work of SERAD officials involves travelling around rural areas to visit farms then it could be argued that they would almost be expected to understand the local dialect.

Sixteen people said that they might use dialect or SSE and 5 said that they might use SSE. Only 1 person felt it was appropriate to address agricultural official in SSE.

With regard to the age group responses, a total of 5 from the 16-24 group said that they had any contact with ADO people so their use of dialect had little impact on the overall figures. Eleven informants from 25-44 and 9 in the 45-64 age group said that they would use dialect at all times. In the next two categories those age group were fairly consistent with 5 and 2

8.10 Councillors

Moving on to the councillors - the elected members of Orkney Islands Council - who serve their constituents for a period of 4 years. The Council is made up of individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some are Orcadians, others English and the Convener or leader was born in Northern Ireland and farms on the island of Westray.

Almost half the total - 44 people - said that they would always use dialect when speaking to their councillors. Nearly 20% said they might use dialect while said that they might use dialect. Only 3 people said that they would use SSE.

Just over 50% or 11 of the 16- 24 age group answered the question with the others saying that they had never had any reason to speak to their councillor and had never met the elected representative. From the 11 young people, 2 spoke dialect at all times, 7 might use dialect and 2 would always use SSE.

The 25-44 age group appeared to be confident in speaking dialect as 17 out of 30 gave this response while only 6 said that they would often use dialect, Over 50% of the 45-64 group apparently use their dialect at all times with 7 possibly using dialect.

Almost half of the 65+ group said that they would use dialect at all times while 6 said that they would often use dialect. The overall summary here is that most of the informants will use dialect when speaking to councillors.

8.11 Council Officials

Council officials are employees of Orkney Islands Council and carry out multifarious tasks in connection with services provided by the local authority. They may be in contact with many of the population albeit over the telephone or by mail.

A total of 88 people gave a response in this category with 30 of them saying that they would always use dialect. Only 1 person in the 16-24 age group said that they would use dialect and 14 from the 25-44 chose to use dialect when speaking to council

officials. One third of the 45-64 would use dialect while only 5 people in the 65+ group saying that they would discuss their business in this way.

It is important to mention that a number of officials employed by OIC may have moved in to Orkney or they might be descendants of the migrants. This could influence the way in which people would interact with them. Twenty people said that they would often use dialect but a fairly high number - 30 people - said that they might use dialect or SSE. Approximately one third of the 25-44 and the 45-64 age groups chose this option. Very few people indicated that they might use or always use SSE.

8.12 District Nurses

There were very similar responses in the district nurses section to those of the council officials. The data was not dissimilar to that given and this might suggest that people view the nurses as public servants providing a community service.

Only 82 people answered this question with comments from the other 18 ranging from "I hiv never seen the district nurse " to " I do not ken who she is"

Only 5 people said that they would often use dialect when speaking to the district nurse while at the other end of the dialect continuum a total of 30 said that they would always use dialect. This is broken down to 16-24 (2); 25-44 (13); 45-64 (9) and 6 people from the 65+ age group. In the next category a total of 24 said that they would often use dialect with 8 people from the 65+ giving this as their choice.

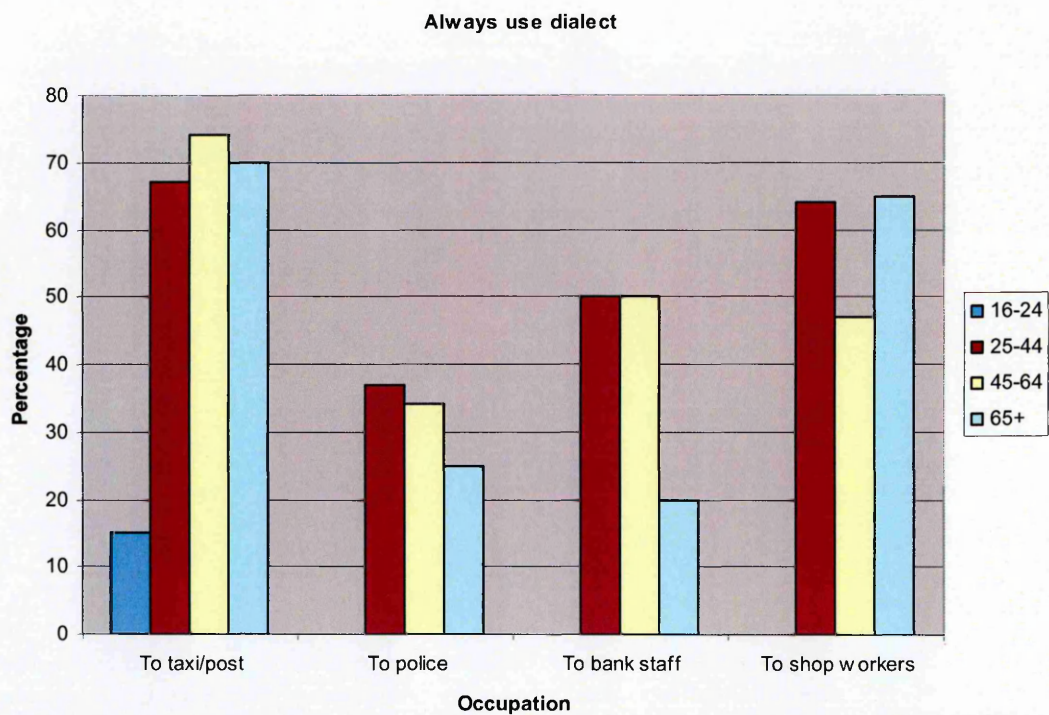
This sub group is involved with community work and there appears to be a trend towards the use of dialect or preference of dialect over SSE. From the four occupations, only 7 responses to the use of dialect at all times. On the left side of the table the combined number of responses to always use dialect is 129. This would indicate that people are comfortable with the use of dialect when talking to people engaged in community or council related occupations.

Section Four

Table 8.4 Showing the responses for group four: taxi drivers/postmen,
police, bank staff and shop assistants

	Always dialect				Often dialect				3 Might use dialect or SSE				2 Often use SSE				1 Always use SSE			
Taxi / Postmen	59				28				8				1				1			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
97	3	20	22	14	10	9	6	3	3	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Police	26				25				26				7				1			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
85	0	11	10	5	2	5	11	7	10	8	5	3	2	3	1	1	1	0	3	1
Bank staff	34				28				21				8				4			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
95	0	15	15	4	5	8	8	7	7	5	5	4	3	2	2	1	3	0	0	1
Shop Assistants	46				30				20				2				2			
Total	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
100	0	19	14	13	6	11	8	5	8	2	8	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

Diagram 8.4 Always use dialect: to taxi drivers, the police, to bank staff and shop workers



In the fourth group a variety of occupations are considered. Those occupations cover services to the public offered by institutions and private enterprise. Members of the public are likely to encounter taxi drivers at some stage through their life and they might also have some contact with the police. More regular interaction might be carried on with shop assistants although this be might be brief and also in retail outlets of various sizes. Less regular contact is likely with bank staff as a number of people carry out banking by electronic means.

8.13 Taxi drivers and postmen

One of the striking features in the figure above is the number of people who say that they always use dialect when speaking to taxi drivers and postmen. Apparently 59 people communicate in this way with 28 informants saying that they would often use

dialect. If those totals are combined this means that 77% of informants would use some form of dialect with only 8 people saying that they might use dialect. Only one person said that they might use SSE and one person said that they would always use SSE. Spread through the age groups the use of dialect is stronger among the older age groups with only 3 young people saying that they always use dialect.

8.14 Police

The figures in connection with the police are in contrast to those given for taxi drivers and postmen. Opinions are finely balanced with attitude options 5, 4 and 3 gaining 26, 25 and 26 respectively. Some comments here:

- “ I do not really hiv much contact wae the police”

I hiv not spoken much tae the police”
- SY-F23

BY-F41

There does not appear to be any over-riding viewpoint in connection with the way in which people speak to members of the local constabulary. The occupation of the informant could be linked to their opinion along with their location in Orkney. In the more remote islands there is no direct police presence and their visits are sporadic.

Among the 16-24 age group no young person said that they would always use dialect and only 2 said that they would often use dialect. Ten said that they might use dialect while 2 said often use SSE and one person always use SSE. The 25-44 age group and the 45-64 were almost equally divided with 11 and 10 expressing their view that they would not change their manner of speaking to the police. Only 5 people, from a total

of 20 informants, in the 65+ age group gave this response. Does this suggest that members of the older generation still regard the police with a high degree of respect?

On the “often use dialect” option only 5 informants aged 25-44 said that this would be their choice with 11 people in the 45-64 expressing this view. In the 65+ age group 7 people said that they would often use dialect. Looking at the number of people who might use dialect 8 from the 25-44 group and 5 from the 45-64 group stated that they might chose dialect or SSE. Three people from the 65+ decided that they could use either variation.

Although figures are not striking in the “often use SSE” and “always use SSE” categories, a total of 12 people between the four age groups said that they would prefer this way of speaking to the police. Three people aged 45-64 thought that police should be addressed in the “proper” way.

8.15 Bank staff

According to the results no young people spoke to bank staff in the Orcadian dialect. In the 25-44 and 45-64 age groups, however, 50% (or 15 people) in each case said that this would be the way they would discourse with members of their bank. Four people from the older age group answered in this way. In total 34 informants said that dialect was their preferred option.

In the next section, 28 informants said that they would often use dialect. At the opposite end of the age categories, 5 young people and 7 older people chose this option. The figures for the 25-44 and the 45-64 age groups show 7 informants in each

case. Similar data is shown for the number of people who might use dialect with 20% of the total divided between the four age groups. A total of 8 people said that they would often use SSE with 4 people saying that they would always use SSE.

8.16 Shop Assistants

Nearly 50% of all respondents said that they would always speak dialect to shop assistants. In the next category 30 people said that they would often use dialect while 20 individuals said that they might use dialect. There seems to be a fairly strong trend towards dialect in this instance with only 2 people opting for often uses SSE and only 2 persons saying that they would always use SSE.

Not one young person said that they would always use dialect but 19 people from the 25-44 age group and 14 from the 45-64 age-group were sure that this would be the way in which they would speak to people who served them in shops. In the 65+ age - group 13 people or 65% of the total said that they would use dialect.

In the “often use dialect” section, 6 young people said that they would use the dialect fairly regularly while 5 people in the 65+ age-group said that this would likely. With regard to the other two groups, 11 from 25-44 age-group, and 8 from 45-64 age-group said that they would often use dialect when buying things from a shop.

The figures for shop assistants show a fairly high preference to the use of dialect with about 75% of the total informants using dialect in a regular way. It would appear that the younger generation prefer some use of SSE with 8 opting for might use dialect and 2 saying often use SSE with a further 2 people saying always use SSE. None of

the other three age groups would use SSE to any great extent when conversing to shop assistants.

From those responses it would appear that informants feel more relaxed in the presence of shop assistants compared with members of the police force or, indeed, bank staff. Perhaps this might be the social distance or even the perceived status of the “official” people in comparison with the less formal setting of a retail outlet.

8.17 Summary of Chapter Eight

The results in this chapter related to only one question - the use of dialect within social and occupational groupings. As responses were fairly voluminous and many important comments made it was felt that the most effective method of reportage would be in the form of a separate chapter.

As mentioned at the outset 17 different groups were featured ranging from friends and neighbours to service workers and professional people. On the questionnaire the arrangement was random as this would preclude informants from looking at some occupations as a single entity. For the purposes of analyses and interpretation the groups were then divided into four sections to facilitate a more composite picture.

The first section covered family and friends, work colleagues, along with neighbours, and speaking on the telephone. It would appear that a significant number of people use dialect at all times. In all sections reporting of the frequency of dialect was measured (see Appendix 5). One of the reasons for the reporting of the frequent use of

dialect could have been the familiarity and social distance where informants felt confident in their use of the vernacular.

Issues of status and prestige were less significant in the context of using dialect in discourse with professional people such as doctors and ministers. Although there was a mixture of responses, there was not an overwhelming feeling of the need to use SSE. Some comments on respect and deference were highlighted and some of the 65 and over age group had been brought up to “speak proper tae the doctor and the minister.”

Varied responses were identified in the third group which included people in official positions with reasons being cited of “not seeing them very often” being given as the reasons behind the amount of dialect used. In the last group the trend seemed to lean towards the dialect as those workers – postmen, taxi drivers, and policemen - were seen as serving the community so more likely to be involved with fairly short exchanges of speech most likely in dialect.

From a broad perspective it seems that people will use dialect at most times when speaking to a range of different occupational groupings. The stigma of using dialect appears to be less evident than it might have been in past times. Attitudes seem to be changing towards the use of dialect especially when speaking to people in higher status occupations. It was mentioned however that people would use dialect if they felt that this was appropriate. Once again effective communication was the premier issue. The mode was related to the medium and the message.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter the aims and objectives will be revisited to ascertain whether or not those have been achieved. The research questions will be discussed and the findings examined in order to test the statements made in Chapter 1. A summary of the fieldwork will highlight the main features and how they fit into the theoretical background that informed the thesis. Any improvements to the work will be considered within the text along with possible avenues for further research.

9.1.1 Summary

The aims and objectives set out in Chapter 1 were “to measure and evaluate the effects of social and cultural influences on the use of dialect in Orkney”. The attitudes of local people were to be examined and the key features of migration and the movement of people highlighted as possible influential factors within the process. Although not a linguistic project the work was informed by social and cultural studies in conjunction with the branch of sociolinguistics dealing with elements of social science such as sociology, psychology and anthropology.

The research questions as stated were as follows:

- Has the perception of Orkney dialect, employed within a range of age groups, been influenced by migration to Orkney and emigration from the islands?
- To what extent do the speakers of Orkney dialect relate changes in the use of Orkney dialect to social, cultural and demographic factors?

- How frequently do the dialect speakers in this study report using the dialect themselves, with different interlocutors?
- What are the attitudes of dialect speakers towards their use of Orkney dialect and what social functions do they consider that the dialect fulfils?
- Have the variations in the use of dialect and the recognition of such changes been perceived as exacerbated by the increased movement of people within Orkney and greater mobility in terms of travel outwith the islands?

The fieldwork examined the attitudes, opinions, feelings and experiences of people from four age groups located throughout the islands and parishes. The findings will contribute to our understanding of how a small island community has been influenced by a number of social and cultural changes and how these factors have impacted on the way people speak and use dialect in their localities. The main areas of concern included ensuring that people continue to use the dialect in order to negate the possibility of language and dialect death; the attention paid by the indigenous population to the way they perceive migrants and how they co-exist within the community; and the promotion of positive attitudes towards dialect and dialect variations.

The first research question asked whether or not the perception of dialect had been influenced by migration to Orkney and emigration from the islands. This study has shown that some of the migration has been seen as positive as it has kept the island communities alive and, therefore, given the local people a reason to stay on the island. The movement of people has provided the impetus for recognition of the vernacular as people realised that their dialect was special and distinctive.

One of the areas which was of interest was the way in which attitudes are shaped and whether or not the changing population has instilled certain feelings within local people and affected their views on the use of dialect. If this was the case then it was not overtly displayed and a number of the informants said that their main reasons for altering their use of dialect was to be understood. Their opinions on the use of dialect along with its cultural and heritage value was undiminished and in some cases strengthened by the migratory changes.

A key question asked informants to choose the greatest influence on the use of dialect from 4 different options. The results were interesting in that 50 people said that incomers – or migrants – would be their first choice with 25 people choosing the media as their preferred option. The movement of people or mobility accounted for 13 responses while 12 people chose the changing attitudes in Orkney. Those results suggest that incomers are significant and many people do see the migrants as the main driving force of change in language. It is also important to take account of the fact that media was chosen by 25 people. The media was also raised during the recorded interviews.

The second research question was to what extent did the speakers of Orkney dialect relate the changes in the use of dialect to social, cultural and demographic factors? In the attitude survey, the 16 - 24 age group thought that Orkney was becoming more multi cultural and mentioned media and migrant teachers as influential with regard to the dialect. The 65 and over age group said that they had experienced a number of changes throughout their lives but they had tried not to alter the way they used dialect. The disappearance of “old words” was seen as inevitable given the changing

population, with new cultural ideas and external influences such as the media and internet. Comments relating to the fact that “me mum uses words that I do not use and me granny will use words that neither of us will use” suggested that the vocabulary of Orcadians has changed over the past 30 – 40 years. It is difficult to determine whether or not the change in use of words has been prompted by peer pressure or, as seems more likely, changing practices in farming and some social activities, have rendered the words and phrases redundant.

The social and cultural changes were mentioned by all informants but there were positive and negative comments offered. Some people felt that incomers had kept life in the community adding a vibrant and different dimension to the place. Other people bemoaned the loss of the way of life along with the socialising and the changes to the way of speaking with the disappearance of words that nobody understood any more

The next question considered the frequency with which the dialect speakers, in this study reported use of dialect themselves, with different interlocutors. The attitude survey included a question on the use of dialect within a range of people from different social and occupational groupings. All informants said that they would either use dialect at all times or very often when speaking to their family and to their friends. Neighbours might be people from outwith Orkney so the use of dialect was dependent on the level of familiarity. With regard to the telephone, when answering the informants might use either dialect or SSE and the language would be determined by the identity of the caller.

In the section on professional people – doctors, ministers, teachers and lecturers - there was divergence of opinion. Some people would use dialect while others spoke SSE out of deference as they felt that it was the way to address such professionals. It would appear that the barriers are breaking down as there is no longer an insistence to speak Scottish Standard English. If the professional person was Orcadian then there seemed to be less motivation to use SSE.

When speaking to councillors, council officials, officers from the dept of agriculture or district nurses, the comments suggested that using dialect would depend on circumstances. Those people were all seen as serving the community and therefore had to be able to understand the populace as a whole. Some people had never met the councillor or did not know the identity of their district nurse.

Looking at the occupations serving the public: postmen, policemen, taxi drivers and people who work in banks and shops, dialect was used frequently as most of these workers were only seen in brief interludes and little fragments of conversations or exchanges would be more likely than an extensive speech event. It was evident, however that some people would speak less dialect to policemen and bank staff as they were sometimes seen as more "officious" and levels of formality would be established.

Age played a part in the choice of whether to use dialect or SSE. Younger people reported more use of SSE in certain speech situations. The middle age groups had more confidence in speaking dialect to a greater range of people. In the case of the 65 and over age group there were some interesting points mentioned as this group

reported more use of SSE than the younger informants as a result of attitudes and habits formulated in their youth when standards and styles were more rigid than they are today.

The next research question related to the attitudes of dialect speakers towards their use of Orkney dialect and the social functions which they considered that the dialect fulfils. Attitudes are central to the research questions and from the interviews, it became apparent that people held different attitudes depending on their personal position in the community, occupation, family circumstances and, to some extent, the demographic structure of the community. Some people felt that they had to “tone down” their dialect in order to be understood or because of their professional image; some thought that the use of dialect in entertainment was enjoyable and encouraged people to use it while others had a negative view about the use of dialect in this format especially when it is a vehicle for humour and not taken seriously.

Most of the informants said that they spoke dialect regularly with no person using SSE as their main form of speaking. There was a fairly high level of code-switching with more than half the sample stating that they would often switch. The main reason given for switching was to be understood with 98 people giving this response. It must be mentioned that 36 people said the formality of the situation would affect their decision. The middle age groups (25-44 and 45-64) said that they tried to use dialect at meetings when there was an opportunity or when it was appropriate to do so. With regard to the prestige value of dialect, the consensus of opinion was that it would be advantageous to use SSE in certain professional or work situations.

The final research question was as follows: “Have the variations in the use of dialect and the recognition of such changes been perceived as exacerbated by the increased movement of people within Orkney and greater mobility in terms of travel outwith the islands?” There is no conclusive evidence to support this question. It could be argued that the use of ridicule by peers encouraged change in the different varieties of dialect in order to accommodate the speech of dialect speakers within another location.

However, the source of this ridicule was sometimes fellow islanders. This contradicts other findings which suggested that the dialect was an emblem of cohesiveness and loyalty among all Orcadian people. In this context it was Orcadians themselves who were reported as speaking in disparaging terms and initiating feelings of inadequacy about the local tongue or the variations that exist in certain parts of Orkney. Some Orcadians also mock local people who “chant” using an affectation in order to create a more positive image. Comments made by informants were directed to the way some people engage in a “pittan on” way of speaking which means either creating a false accent or trying to speak broader than they would do in a natural situation.

9.1.2 Interviews across three generations: further findings

Throughout the interviews there were areas of commonality and also some issues which were perceived as more important than others. In the next section a summary of the findings across three generations will be given. Some general topics will then be discussed, in section 9.3 based on the keywords and phrases mentioned. In the families the main points discussed will be the use of dialect at home and at school, how young people are affected by the use of dialect, the understanding of “old” words and familial influences.

Dialect at home: throughout the three generations – grandparental , parental and younger generation – dialect was spoken regularly at home. This was influenced by the age of the people interviewed and the living conditions such as whether or not a grandparent lived in close proximity to the younger members of the family. Some families had a strong wish to speak Orkney dialect while others were less prescriptive.

Dialect at school: some areas of difference in connection with school were pointed out. The use of dialect at school was dependent on and related to the attitudes of teachers at different schools. For a period of time, from 1945 to 1960, there was a groundswell of opinion that was directed towards the benefits of learning “good” Scottish Standard English in order to equip the young people for the future. This affected the 45 – 64 age group in particular although the 65 and over group also said that they had to speak English in the classroom. According to the 16 - 25 age group, there more freedom to speak dialect at times.

Young people and dialect: there was evidence that parents and grandparents had influenced some of the young members of the family. As has been mentioned this was linked to the proximity of the grandchildren to their family. Where families had been based within the same district, parish or island, there was more use of dialect between the three generations. Where families were separated through work or choice, there were differences in the amount of code-switching and the use of dialect terminology.

The parents as a group: There was considerable variation in connection with the “middle” person in the generational scenario. The way of speaking adopted by the parent might have been affected by externalities such as time spent at an educational

institution away from Orkney. Some parents had also been influenced by their work experiences or expectations regarding use of a certain language in the workplace. Most of the people in this category, however, had the confidence to use dialect or SSE when they felt it was appropriate. When asked what they thought had influenced their offspring, many said the television or “friends at school”. It is interesting to speculate that the parents, in some cases, might have inadvertently encouraged their children to speak less dialect by exposing them to US orientated children’s programmes from an early age.

9.2 The nature and significance of the study

The notion of the uniqueness of the dialect and how it is connected with traditions within communities is important. The manner and level of eloquence must be discussed along with the naturalness of the use of dialect. Social pretension and artificiality leads to conflicts between dialect speakers and can also impact on the attitudes of people towards the vernacular. Within the fieldwork threats to the dialect from external and internal sources were highlighted and identified. Migration, media and mobility were key factors which influenced the use of dialect.

As the fieldwork in Chapter 8 indicated, in connection with social and occupational groupings, the amount of dialect spoken and the strength of engagement within the communities suggest that the decision to use the vernacular is intertwined with the integration and shared identities of the people of those communities.

The use of dialect is viewed by some people as lacking the prestige value and can be a barrier to furtherance of careers and employment progression. In formal situations

such as board meetings or public events, some dialect speakers feel that it would not be appropriate to engage people using the dialect. Standardised forms would be chosen in an effort to accommodate all the people within a speech event. This attitude exists in the minds of people who have experienced ridicule or some form of criticism of their native tongue. As the results of the interviews show, there is a greater confidence in using dialect among the younger age groups and this should enhance the dialect along with its value as a means of communication.

Threats may emanate from migration to the islands, from the media, from the attitudes of local people to the use of dialect and from the natural development of language through time. The migration issues have been explored and it has been shown that this is a significant factor in the formation of attitudes to the future of the dialect.

Television and other forms of the media – such as the radio and the internet – have also been seen as a threat to the continuance of the dialect in Orkney.

Although previous studies by van Leyden and Lange covered aspects of dialect from different approaches, this study focussed on the perceptions of the dialect speakers and their attitudes to the use of dialect. Through the interviews a corpus of information has been collected which will also add to the knowledge of the ways in which the Orkney tongue is spoken in a variety of speech situations.

This study examined the social and cultural factors which have influenced the use of dialect and the research provided original material in a hitherto unexplored field. As outlined further in this chapter, it is hoped that further research will build on the

material gathered and this will lead to a composite body of knowledge on the use of dialect in Orkney.

9.3 The constraints on the study

With hindsight the study could have been improved by a reduction in the number of locations. In an effort to cover a broad range of islands and parishes, the volume of the responses and the plethora of information collected posed some challenges for the analysis of the research questions. It would have been prudent to have chosen 6 locations consisting of 2 islands, one East Mainland parish, one West Mainland parish and the towns of Kirkwall and Stromness. This would have provided a more in depth yet succinct conclusion.

The Attitude Survey would have benefited from redesign and re-ordering of questions. The question on the greatest influences on the dialect (question 16) would have been better placed earlier in the questionnaire (following the personal information) The media questions – on local and national radio – could have been merged as this would have provided a more concise means of establishing links with the use of different varieties of dialects.

9.4 Further research

This study focused on the social and cultural factors which have influenced the use of dialect in Orkney. As this was a fairly broadly based description that could encompass a wide range of potential topics, it was necessary to examine the attitudes of the local population to the way they use dialect and the ways in which social and cultural issues

are perceived to have impacted on the variations of the vernacular used in different parts of the archipelago in the present day.

During the course of the interviews and other fieldwork, some issues were highlighted which inspired some ideas for further research in the field. One of the main areas for future projects was the rationale behind the way people speak in a variety of social and work situations. Why do people feel they need to change and how were their opinions formulated in the first place? This would look at the use of dialect from the perspective of social psychology with related fields of sociology, anthropology and human geography.

Does dialect play any part in the development of the Orcadian identity? Case studies could examine the ways in which the use of the vernacular might have shaped the ways in which individuals have built their personal profile.

The commodification of dialect is another area that could be explored. How is dialect used within the tourism industry in Orkney? Are there features of the heritage interpretation which benefit from and relate to the Orkney dialect?

Linked to the human geography and migration studies, another possible avenue for future research might be a project which could be based on the views of the migrants to Orkney and how they perceive the use of dialect. How do they assimilate with the local population in terms of communication? As part of the findings have suggested some of the children of the migrant population have adopted an Orkney accent and try

to use some of the words. This is an area worthy of further exploration to increase the base of knowledge of the question of integration and migration in island communities.

The variations between the islands and the sociolinguistic environment that supports the use of dialect in certain places in Orkney would be a valid and constructive subject for a research project. This would require intensive case studies of a small number of people from each of the islands. The Mainland of Orkney could also feature as migratory patterns would be different from that of the islands such as Sanday and Eday.

Comparative studies of the Faroes and Shetland could be undertaken. Both the island groups share much in common with Orkney in terms of density of population, island community life and the variations in dialect and language. This research would be a useful resource from perspectives relating to language development, cultural studies, educational aspects and social changes within island communities in the North Atlantic.

The interviews and responses from the attitude survey could also be expanded and some continuation work in future years could examine how the views of informants might have changed from the initial fieldwork.

There is a wide range of possibilities for further research and the projects mentioned in this section are realistic and achievable. There is considerable interest in the topics and also a need to understand the ways in which remote communities cope with

change whether in the field of social and cultural studies, sociolinguistics, human geography or anthropology.

9.5 Resonances with the research literature

The following paragraphs will look at some of the important links with the existing literature, showing how key concepts from the literature assisted in the interpretation of the data gathered.

Holmes (1992) spoke about the stereotypical dialect speakers citing the example of the elderly rural person using words not recognised by city dwellers. Lack of confidence and fear of ridicule was mentioned by Trudgill where the speaker might lack the confidence and experience some humiliation when speaking dialect. This was the experience of a number of the informants who said there was often a sense that people were amused at the use of dialect and this made them wary of speaking the way they were brought up to speak. Trudgill (2002) said, “If we wish to maintain linguistic diversity and oppose linguistic homogenisation, we have to consider speakers’ attitudes to their own dialects” (2002:30) In terms of the subject of this thesis, the attitudes held by the dialect speakers in Orkney and the perceptions of inferiority and prestige can only be addressed by the islanders themselves. Fennell reinforces this and states: “Since Scots has always been so healthy as a spoken form of communication, thriving in a number of regional dialects, it is certain to survive in the meantime. Scottish educational and political policies of the future – but especially the crucial will of the people, its speakers – will be the final arbiter of the fate of this variety” (2001: 195)

The term diglossia as discussed by Ferguson, Fasold, and Fishman often refers to people using two varieties of language. In the context of Orkney the language is SSE but the dialect is based on Norse lexical items in a diglossic speech situation. In the research literature on the concept of speech community (Fasold, Labov, Hymes, Gumperz and Milroy) each regional dialect is seen as signifying a separate speech community. In the case of the interviews in Orkney it could be argued that Orkney is one speech community and, indeed, this could be valid if the variations are seen as micro communities within the main entity. If one is too rigorous in defining boundaries of the speech community in Orkney then this would preclude discussion of some of the richness and variety of the Orkney tongue.

Social Network Analysis provides a facility for measuring the closeness of relationships within a community. It is a way of identifying the way speakers use language variation to signal different kinds of identity along with social aspiration. The relationships may cover formal or informal situations and may be influenced by family, friendship, neighbourhood, ethnicity, work experiences and community activities.

Code-switching was discussed in chapters 6 and 7 in relation to the interviews and was one of the questions in the attitude survey. Trudgill (2000; 201) mentioned bi-dialectism and spoke about Standard English being used at school and or at formal occasions. He felt that children should be allowed to use their own dialect and develop the ability to switch. Both varieties should be equally acceptable in any society. Trudgill's remarks were echoed in the comments made by the informants in this study who said that the dialect should be used in school and also whenever it was

possible in other social occasions. It should be encouraged and not perceived as an oddity or lacking prestige.

The “chantin” process is worthy of consideration. This is not used in the way that chanting is usually understood where religious people might recite a particular mantra or spiritual message. In Orkney “chantin” is used to describe the way in which people use the standard form of English as an affectation. It differs from the process of code-switching as participants may attempt to use a hypercorrected form of dialect leaning towards SSE but spoken in a manner which is less credible and does not reflect the way in which those persons would usually use language

The communities of practice approach developed by Eckert (2005) informed the study as it focused on the meaning of languages within communities. As Marshall (2004) suggested this approach is useful in undertaking research in small rural communities. In his Huntly research elements from Social Network Theory were not best placed to analyse the complexities of tight knit communities. In the context of this study of Orkney dialect the research undertaken by Marshall and the communities of practice approach put forward by Eckert were relevant and assisted with the understanding of the fieldwork as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

9.6 Concluding comments

Macafee (1997) points out in her paper in *The Edinburgh History of the Scots Language* that the dialect of Scots employed in Orkney and Shetland provide characteristics that are well placed to represent the ways in which rural communities cope with the pressures of migration while maintaining their native tongue:

“It seems likely that broad dialects of Scots will survive only in communities that have some degree of immunity to hegemonic external factors, which usually means rural communities with sufficient economic resources to prevent massive out-migration of the younger generation and sufficient self-assurance to absorb and nativise incomers. The north-east, Orkney and Shetland are the places that best fulfil those criteria. A particular characteristic of these areas is the vertical integration of the community. Middle class people, including teachers, who have grown up in the area speaking the local dialect and participating in the local culture, are able to provide children with role models, demonstrating by example, that local people can succeed, and that they can be bi-dialectal” (1997:546)

It is apparent that equilibrium is emerging within the use of dialect across the islands and parishes in Orkney. The cultural significance is recognised through the use of dialect in a variety of situations (Chapters 5 and 6). It is used as form of entertainment and at events, there are programmes on the local radio station featuring dialect words and the works of Robert Rendall and Christina Costie (Chapter 3) provide people with the richness of the tongue through poetry and prose.

The dialect in Orkney affects people at all levels within the community and is regarded as a valuable resource. In a world where languages and dialect evolve and change the local dialect will also change and some of the words might not be in the vocabulary of all speakers. There are feelings of optimism that it will survive but this durability will depend on the willingness of people to use dialect and a positive attitude towards its value to Orkney.

There is a strong interest in the Orkney dialect and any weaknesses highlighted as a result of demographic change may be countered by the resilience of the dialect in the ever-changing population of the islands. Attitudes may have been shaped by social and cultural factors but there is a strong sense of identity and pride in the use of dialect in Orkney. In the *Orkney Dictionary* the following verse by Harvey Johnston encapsulates the subject of this study in a succinct way. In his advice to young people who would use the Dictionary to advise them on many Orkney dialect words he says:

And than wan day you'll realise

When you are no so young

That Orkney's greatest treasure is

By far, its mither tongue

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Attitude Questionnaire

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF ORKNEY DIALECT

1

AGE GROUP

16-24

25-44

45-64

65+over

2

SEX

Male

Female

3

PLACE OF BIRTH

Resident of.....

4 OCCUPATION

Professional	Administrative	Skilled trades
Semi skilled (inc farming)	Sales and customer service	Manual
Process/plant machine	Student	Retired

5 EDUCATION

School	Further Education	College	University
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Age when completed full time education:

6 QUALIFICATIONS

No Certificate	School Certificate and Grade
College Certificate/Diploma	Degree

7 IN YOUR DAILY LIFE WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU USE DIALECT:

Very frequently	frequently	quite frequently
not very frequently	not at all	

8 HOW OFTEN DO YOU SWITCH BETWEEN DIALECT AND SCOTTISH STANDARD ENGLISH (SSE)?

very frequently	fairly frequently	quite frequently
not very frequently	not at all	

9 WHY DO YOU SWITCH BETWEEN DIALECT AND SSE?

to make myself understood	because of the status of the person
Because of the formality of the situation	to change the topic of conversation

10 ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE USE OF DIALECT WHEN SPEAKING TO THE FOLLOWING?

Key

5 - always use dialect; 4 - often use dialect; 3 - might use dialect or SSE
2 - often use SSE; 1 – always use SSE (enter appropriate number)

member of your family	your neighbour
taxi driver/postman	shop assistant
policeman	work colleagues
personal friends	councillor
agricultural dept official	council office officer
bank staff	district nurse
doctor	minister
teacher/lecturer	lawyer
when answering the telephone	

11 CAN YOU THINK OF ANY DISADVANTAGES OF USING DIALECT?

12 AT FORMAL MEETINGS DO YOU SPEAK DIALECT:

at all times	regularly	seldom
not at all	not applicable	

13 RADIO ORKNEY HAS PRESENTERS WHO ARE DIALECT SPEAKERS – WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON THE USE OF DIALECT ON THE STATION?

I enjoy it and it should be encouraged:

5 = strongly agree	4 = agree	3 = no strong feelings
2 = disagree	1 = strongly disagree	0 = don't know

14 ON THE NATIONAL MEDIA THERE SEEMS TO BE A MOVE AWAY FROM THE USE OF RECEIVED PRONOUNCIATION ON NEWS PROGRAMMES. REGIONAL ACCENTS ARE HEARD MORE OFTEN ON CURRENT AFFAIRS. DO YOU THINK THAT THIS IS:

5 = refreshing and should be encouraged
4 = fine but does not treat the news in a serious manner
3 = should be discouraged
2 = not making any difference to the programme
1 = should not be allowed

15 WHAT EFFECT HAS THE TELEVISION/MEDIA HAD UPON THE USE OF DIALECT IN ORKNEY?

5 = greatly encouraged it	4 = encouraged to a certain extent
3 = no real effect	2 = discouraged it
1 = very strongly discouraged it	0 = don't know

**16 WHAT DO YOU THINK HAS HAD THE GREATEST INFLUENCE
ON THE USE OF DIALECT IN ORKNEY? (*rate in order of preference 1 to 4 –
with 1 being the greatest*)**

- Changing attitudes towards the use of dialect
- The influx of incomers to Orkney over the past 30 years
- The influence of the media
- Mobilisation of people between the islands / outside Orkney

**17 WHAT ISLANDS AND PARISHES COULD YOU IDENTIFY BY
THEIR USE OF DIALECT?**

Sanday(33)	Stronsay(32)	Westray(34)	Eday(31)
North Ron’say(36)	P Westray(35)	Rousay(23)	Hoy(24)
Flotta(22)	Shapinsay(21)	Kirkwall(01)	Stromness(08)
Sandwick(05)	Holm(11)	Finstown(02)	Orphir (03)
Burray (14)	Harray(04)	South Ron’say(15)	Deerness(13)
Tankerness(12)	Birsay(09)	Evie(07)	Rendall(06)
Stenness (16)			

**18 CAN YOU SAY WHY YOU WOULD RECOGNISE THOSE
DIALECTS?**

**19 CAN YOU STATE WHICH DIALECT VARIATIONS YOU WOULD
ALWAYS RECOGNISE?**

**20 TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK THAT THE USE OF SSE
GIVES PEOPLE AN ADVANTAGE COMPARED WITH THE USE OF
ORKNEY DIALECT?**

- 5 = Very clear advantage
- 4 = Does on the whole
- 3 = No real advantage
- 2 = Does not give people an advantage
- 1 = Definitely does not give people an advantage
- 0 = Don't know

21 WHAT DOES LANGUAGE MEAN TO YOU?

- A means of communication
- A symbol of identity
- A symbol of group membership
- A facility that can be changed according to social situations

COMMENTS

Date of Completion

Reference Number

Transcriptions

Transcription No. 1 SP-M70

TR Wis dialect spoken all the time at home

SP-M70 No – me mither wis a teacher and tried tae teach us English when she could but by far the most o it wis Just straight dialect. I had a granny who wis of coorse a lot owlder and she spoke nothing bit the dialect.

TR At the school hoo did you speak

SP-M70 Wae wir not alloood tae speak dialect and all the teachers then tried to encourage us to speak English

TR Whit did you think of that

SP-M70 Wae fund it extremely difficult tae chant an that wis frowned on – even when you tried to speak English – even the doctor and the minister roared and laughed bccis it cam oot all wrong. I can mind when I went off at the age o 18 tae a football coaching course in St Andrews they barely kent whit I wis saying half the time and it wis good fun sometimes. It wis boys fae all over Scotland and they all their own dialects but they had a laugh at mine.

TR Did you change the way you spoke tae them

SP-M70 You tried tae bit you knew you wirna makin anything o it

TR Whit aboot when you geed tae the Grammar School

SP-M70 That was the times when John Shearer wis Director o Education and he tried his best tae eliminate dialect. Dialect wis spoken entirely ootside bit wae widna speak dialect in class – that wis frowned on.

TR Did you notice any differences wae bairns fae the other isles like Sanday or Westray

SP-M70 Weel the funny thing is that there must have been a difference and I hid freends fae all ower and there must hiv been something – it must have been there but it never appeared different – I just canna explain it

TR What happened after you left school

SP-M70 I started on the fairm back in Shapinsay and wae just spoke dialect all the time

TR So whit other things did you get involved wae on the island

SP-M70 I wis Chairman o the local NFU (National Farmers Union) and on committees and started to go off regularly tae meetings in Edinburgh

TR Did you have tae change the way you spoke

SP-M70 Weel it wis all country guys fae around Scotland and they spoke their dialect and I spoke mine

TR When did you become involved wae local politics

SP-M70 Weel I went on the Council in 1981 so that is 25 years ago

TR When you attended meetings hoo did you deal with the way of speaking and the dialect

SP-M70 As the years hiv gone on I an finding it easier tae speak English – it has been commented on

TR Are there any times when you think that you should not speak dialect tae folk

SP-M70 Actually strangely enough that is getting fewer and there wis a time yes when you were off meetin like Government ministers that you hid tae, most o us speak English rather than dialect so as tae makk wirsels understood.

TR When you were at meetings of Council in Kirkwall would most of the members have tried to speak English

SP-M70 Yes mostly they wid have. There has been a slip backwards – maybe a relaxation in that and maybe more folk use more dialect than they used tae

TR Is dialect still a valuable part of the heritage

SP-M70 Dialect changes – weel I am 70 noo and I can mind when there wis a whole lot o words that occasionally crop up in ordinar ferming parlance. Words have died oot wae the changes in ferming and there I whole range o words that have been lost. We used to speak aboot piece time when you hid your cup o tea or sharing aff when you hid finished cutting the oats wae the binder.

TR Should Orcadian dialect be preserved

SP-M70 Yes – but it depends on hoo you want to preserve it. It is a spoken language – something that you learn at your granny or mither's knee and writin it doon to preserve it is in me opinion is nonsense becis there is a lot o words that you can pronounce and all roond Orkney there are different inflections and you can't tell that off a book. Preserve it on tape – orally – is fine. Some spelling makes me cringe – every district hid its own way o speaking and you cannot preserve that in a book – it has got to be on tape.

TR So what changes have you seen that has affected life on the island

SP-M70 The thing that has affected dialect the most is that half the kids at the school are speakin pure English – I have three grand daughters and none o them speak dialect – they speak the Orkney version o English wae a lot o Americanisms thrown in. All that is caused by folk comin in tae the island – extremely valuable folk tae hiv but it is inevitable then in conversation that the owld words begin to go so that wae make wirsels understood. They have added a new dimension tae the island.

Transcription No. 2: BY-F41

TR Whit wis spoken at the primary school (in Holm) – wis it dialect or a mixture of SSE and dialect

BY-F41 All the bairns in me class wir fae Orkney. It wis a peedie school and there wis just 5 o us in the class (3 boys and 2 lasses) and there wir no incomers then. Wae hid an Orkney teacher tae start off wae and then later on the Head teacher was a man fae Yorkshire. This was wir first introduction tae a different way o speakin.

TR Do you think that hivan an Orcadian teacher to begin with made a difference tae the way you spoke

BY-F41 I wid say it did definitely – H was me first teacher then CM and then RR fae Yorkshire and I mind rehearsing for a concert and he made me repeat something and everybody wis laughing becis he wis speak in in this broad English accent. He wis weel wint wae Orkney speaking as he had been Head in North Ronaldsay afore he cam tae Holm so if he could understand folk fae North Ronaldsay he could understand folk-F41 fae Holm.

TR Did you attend the Kirkwall Grammar School

BY-F41 Geed there when I wis 12 and that wis a bit o shock tae the system. You are at a school wae aboot 800 pupils hivan been at a school wae 50. A huge number o bairns your own age and classroom for different subjects.

TR How did this affect you – did you keep up they way that you spoke when you were at primary

BY-F41 Wae wir more aware that wae wir broader than they were. They sometimes said that I wis a yokel fae Holm which I didna take offence at.

TR What did you do when you left the school

BY-F41 I actually started the secretarial course at Further Education and did that for 2 weeks when I wis offered a job at Northvet in Harray. I wanted to be a vet bit wisna clever enough to do that so I then decided to be a veterinary nurse. I wis always animal daft and had horses all me life.

TR When you were working at the vets did you just feel at home doing that

BY-F41 I wis among West Mainland fermers that I wirna so familiar way right enough bit it wis no bother really- I wis quite comfy speakin tae ferming folBY-F41. I moved tae Birsay when I got married at the age o 19

TR Did you notice any difference in the way that folk spoke up there

BY-F41S A lot of Birsay folk are very broad bit I wid say that me in laws are no as broad as ither folk in Birsay probably becis they hiv influence fae oot with Orkney I would say

TR Whit do you mean by being very broad

BY-F41 They wid come oot wae more o the kind o speakin that me grand folk (grandparents) wid use. It wis more owld Orkney words like forenent (in front of) for example. I widna use this word bit me granny and granddad wid have used such words

TR Whit is your present job

BY-F41 I got a job at the mart then after a number o years and hivan family, Orkney Livestock Association came along and I wis offered a job wae them. I have been here 5 years noo and its been grand

TR Whit has been the main impact on the use o dialect

BY-F41 Probably TV hid had a pert to play in that and I wid say the incomers as weel. I think the TV does influence young wans. Me bairns speak English and its all becis they hear it on the TV. Me peedie boy – he is 10 – is very broad Orcadian. The next wan also speaks Orcadian. Me youngest wan, a lass, is a bit o a madam and if she is hivan a rant she will speak English.

TR Have you been influenced by TV

BY-F41 No – its wisna so important when I wis young

TR Can I ask you aboot the incomers as you mentioned them afore.

BY-F41 I think at they have definitely made a difference and I ken in me oldest boy's class a number o bairns hiv moved in tae his class and he can do different accents. The folk that are comin in canna mock the Orkney dialect.

TR So, in your job do you speak a lot o dialect

BY-F41 I spaek tae fermers doon the line and here in Orkney and I do find mesel speakin more proper right enough bit I am no very good at stickin tae it and its amazing that folk understand us more than wae gae wersels credit for. I wid say that on a national TV show an Orcadian did hiv an influence. Since he wis on that folk recognise the Orkney accent bit some folk that wae soond Welsh

TR What effect has tourism had on the community and on the dialect

BY-F41 I think that it has bound to hiv made a difference tae the use of dialect. I don't think that you can use broad Orcadian wae the liner passengers and wans like that

TR What aboot dialect in entertainment such as speeches or concerts

BY-F41 Great – I think that if it is Orkney thing Orkney dialect should be used. On the wireless it is always good tae hear Orkney folk speakin and no tryin to change the way that they speak, It is the same at concerts when dialect speakers compere on the stage.

TR Hoo do you see things changing in Orkney and what is the future of Orkney dialect.

BY-F41 Me biggest hope is that farming still stays valuable here in Orkney. If the kye numbers geed doon it wid just be aafil

On the dialect, it depends on the folk that are hivan bairns and if they are using their bairns will pick it up and if they are no their bairns will speak differently. Me bairns speak dialect becis thay have heard me yabbling on the whole time.

There is nothing worse than somebody you ken that is a born and bred Orcadian coming on the wireless and chantin. That just pits me stone mad and I don't know why folk dae that – it is very annoying.

TR So what can be done tae make sure that folk keeps on speaking dialect

BY-F41 I think that dialect should be encouraged in schools – wae are quite lucky in the schools as wae hiv a lot o Orkney teachers and the bairns should be encouraged tae write poetry in dialect.

Transcription No.3

SY-F 23

SY-F23

TR In the classroom did you speak Orcadian?

SY-F23 The teachers never said that wae shouldna speak Orcadian but most o me classmates were English

TR When you came in to the Kirkwall Grammar School was the change compared wae Sanday

SY-F23 Wae mixed wae people wae kent so didna need change the accent really and all the pupils in the hostel were fae the North Isles

TR When you are speak tae your friends hoo much switching do you think that you need to do

SY-F23 In the beginning wae spoke more English tae them bit noo they have gotten tae ken us wae speak Orcadian tae them

TR Did they ever speak Orcadian

SY-F23 They do actually – yeah well – the odd words

TR Whit about your peedie brother – hoo does he seem to speak in comparison wae you

SY-F23 I wid say he uses less Orcadian words than wae do – I think that he is the only Orcadian boy in his class – maybe the only Orcadian in his class.

TR At work do you use dialect or English

SY-F23 Just depends whar I am spaekin tae

TR Whit dae you think o dialect overall

SY-F23 It is important bit whit can you do aboot keeping it up

TR What have been the main influences on dialect

SY-F23 Weel a lot o folk moving aboot and Orcadians go doo tae Edinburgh and pick up the accent doon there. Me aunty moved doon tae Durham and she speak their way doon there.

TR What about the influences of the TV for example – has it affected the way you speak

SY-F23 No really – folk maybe uses slang words fae it but it disna affect ne that much

Young folk are more influenced by TV programmes and kids copy things

TR Do you see any need tae change the way you speak

SY-F23 No – I will just carry on the way that I am. I have lost half the words that me granny wid use

Transcription conventions

The following extracts should assist with the understanding of transcription conventions in connection with the Orkney dialect.

Extract from Lamb, G., (1988) *Orkney Wordbook*, Byrgisey

“The wordbook takes as its basis “The Orkney Norn” a dictionary of what Hugh Marwick considered to be the relics of the Norn language spoken in Orkney. To this has been added all other words and phrases which cannot be found in a Standard English Dictionary as well as English words and phrases which have acquired special meanings in their island setting.

Wherever possible an etymology is provided for the word. Where there is a clear Old Norse connection this is the preferred entry, failing that, connections are looked for in the Norwegian languages and in Norwegian dialects. Several of our dialect words have their origin in the Gaelic language, A sizeable number have no etymology.”

Extracts from Lamb, G., Flaws M., (1996) *The Orkney Dictionary*, Kirkwall, Orkney Language and Culture Group

“Until recently, it was possible to tell exactly which island or part of the Mainland anyone came from by the way they spoke. It is still possible to some extent but not with the same amount of accuracy. This means that, although we speak of Orcadian as a single dialect, within that dialect there are many different ways of same saying the same word; and this makes compiling a dictionary somewhat difficult.

The problem can be solved in two different ways. One is to pick one pronunciation of a word and decide that that should be the standard form, but this would mean losing a lot of variety, colour and interest of the dialect. The second method is to include as many different pronunciations as possible to show the variations between districts, and this is the method we have chosen.”

“ Until now there has been no guide to help with spelling Orcadian and this meant a wide variety of spelling which makes it difficult for the reader. We have therefore tried to bring order and consistency into the spelling of Orcadian sounds. As far as possible we have followed English conventions as these are the most familiar.”

Lamb and Flaws then provide some conventions to help with the spelling of Orcadian words. Some examples are:

AA – used to represent the long “a” sound in *gaan* (going)

AE – used for the sound in Orcadian *paet* and *maet* (peat and meat)

EI – as in Scots *heid* and *breid* (head and bread)

The Consent Form

PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED THE USE OF DIALECT IN ORKNEY

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The Towns, Islands and Parishes

Sanday

The population of Sanday is 500 and the Junior High School has a roll of about 90 pupils. Over the last 30 years the demographic breakdown has changed and there are about 200 Orcadian people left on the island. The clear sandy beaches and the abundant wildlife make this a popular destination for visitors. There is a vibrant social life on the island with a number of community groups such as Sanday Music Group and Sanday Golf Club

Westray

Westray has a similar population to Sanday but the number of incomers moving in to the island has been less significant. According to anecdotal sources the number of migrants on the island could be in the region of 110 making up approximately 20% of the total population of 550. Westray has a thriving community with a number of small craft industries and successful farms. Fishing is still important to the island although the number of boats based on the island has decreased in recent years. In addition to agriculture two sisters set up a textile company on the island and there is also a knitwear co-operative in Westray.

North Ronaldsay

This island is the farthest north of all the Orkney Islands. It is only about 5 miles long and has a population of about 60 people. The number of migrants may vary but at the time of writing there are 15 – 20 people who would be described as “incomers” as they have moved in from outwith the island. The way of life is unique and the

character of the island is noteworthy with a pace of life reminiscent of past generations. One of the key features of the island is the seaweed-eating native sheep; they provide income from the use of wool and knitted garments.

Shapinsay

One of the inner North isles, Shapinsay is close to Mainland Orkney. Some people work in the town and commute daily by ferry. The population is about 320 and is a mixture of long established families and migrants. Local sources on the island suggest that the migrant population might account for about 30% of the total population. Due to its proximity to Kirkwall the island is popular with commuters who work in the town but live in Shapinsay.

Kirkwall

Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, is the main centre of business activity and has a growing population now in the region of 10,000. The population is mixed with a number of exiles from the other islands and parishes along with people whose family have lived in town for generations and others who have moved in outwith the county, mainly to work in Orkney.

Stromness

Stromness, the second town in Orkney, has a population of 1,500 and has a maritime history linked to the herring fishing industry and the Husdon's Bay Company. Some industries have been set up in the town and it is an important ferry link to the Mainland of Scotland.

Sandwick

This parish is situated on the West Mainland and has a population of 780. It has good farming land and fine beaches, attracting many tourists. The village of Skara Brae is situated in Sandwick and, in World War II, two airfields were built in the parish

Stenness

Also in the West Mainland, Stenness borders with the parish of Orphir and is the site of the Ring of Brodgar and the Standing Stones. The population is in the region of 300. This parish is popular with visitors as part of the area was granted World Heritage status denoting its importance as a place of global historic interest.

Harray

The only inland parish – with no shoreline – Harray has a lot of productive farming land and an excellent fishing loch. The Corrigall Farm Museum is situated in the parish and portrays life about 100 years ago. At the time of writing specific population figures per parish were not available in every case, see also Tankerness and South Ronaldsay.

Birsay

The parish of Birsay stands of the far North Western corner of the Mainland of Orkney. It was the centre of power in the early part of the Norse rule (circa 800AD – 1000AD) and the remains of the Earls Palace is one of the visitor attractions in the parish. The combined population of Harray and Birsay is in the region of 1045 and the parishes both benefit from tourism and also have a number of farms and small holdings.

Holm

On the East Mainland, Holm covers a wide area and borders with Kirkwall. About 600 people reside in the parish – some farm the land and others work in Kirkwall. It is a popular commuter area.

Tankerness

Also on the east side of Kirkwall, Tankerness is low lying agricultural land. The airport is situated in the parish and some of the major Bronze Age finds have been excavated here along with the intriguing Iron Age site at Mine Howe. As mentioned, population figures are not available for Tankerness as those figures are incorporated with the neighbouring parishes. There are a number of commuters in the parish but also several prosperous farming enterprises.

South Ronaldsay

The most southerly parish, South Ronaldsay is one of the linked south isles. Some important sites of interests – such as the Tomb of the Eagles – are situated in the parish. It is now one of the gateways to Orkney with ferries coming across from Scotland.

CODES FOR THE ISLANDS, PARISHES AND TOWNS

KW – KIRKWALL

SY – SANDAY

SP – SHAPINSAY

HY – HARRAY

BY – BIRSAY

TK – TANKERNESS

HM – HOLM

OP – ORPHIR

RN – RENDALL

SM – STROMNESS

WY – WESTRAY

NR – NORTH RONALDSAY

SW – SANDWICK

SN – STENNESS

SR – SOUTH RONALDSAY

HY – HOY

EV – EVIE